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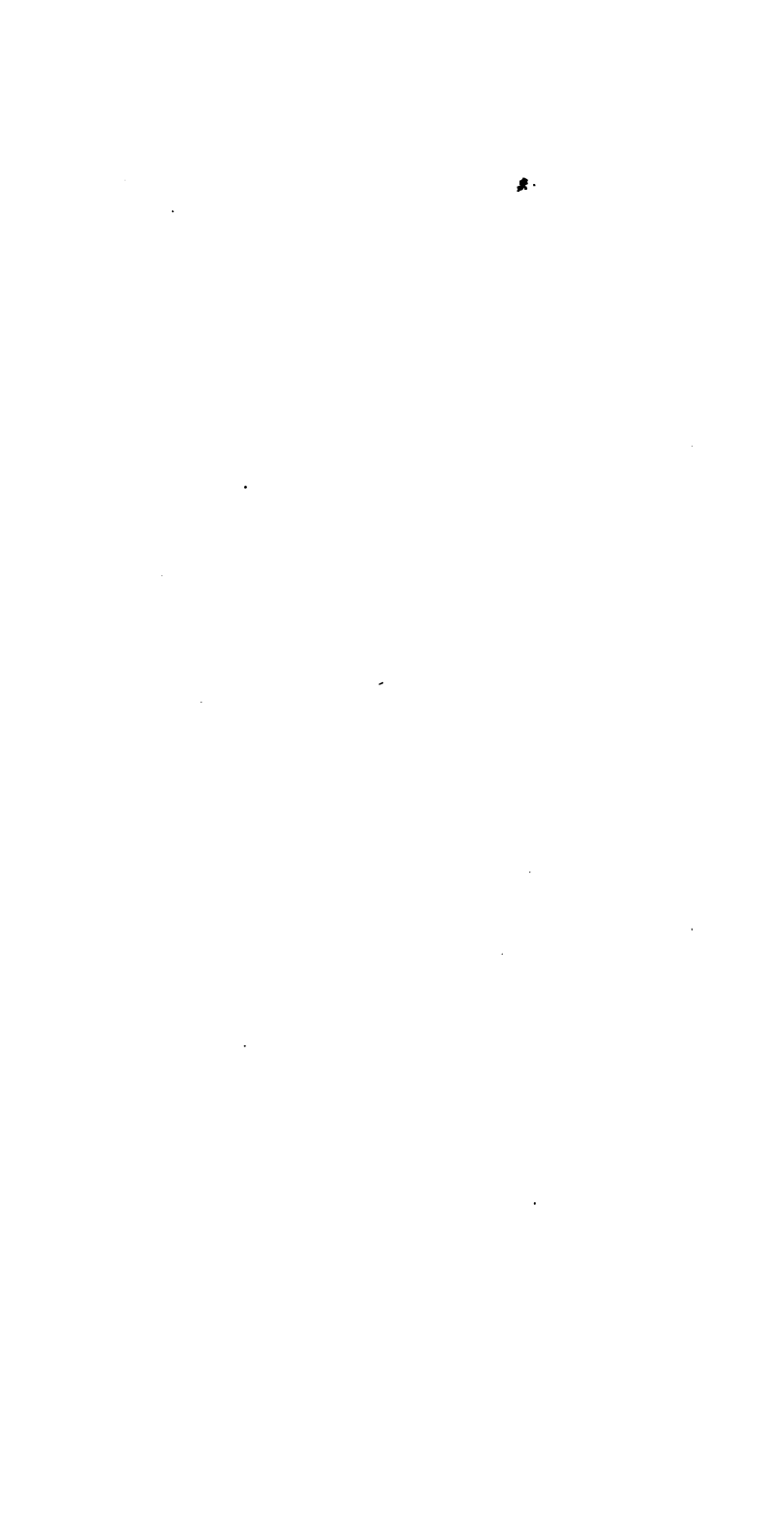




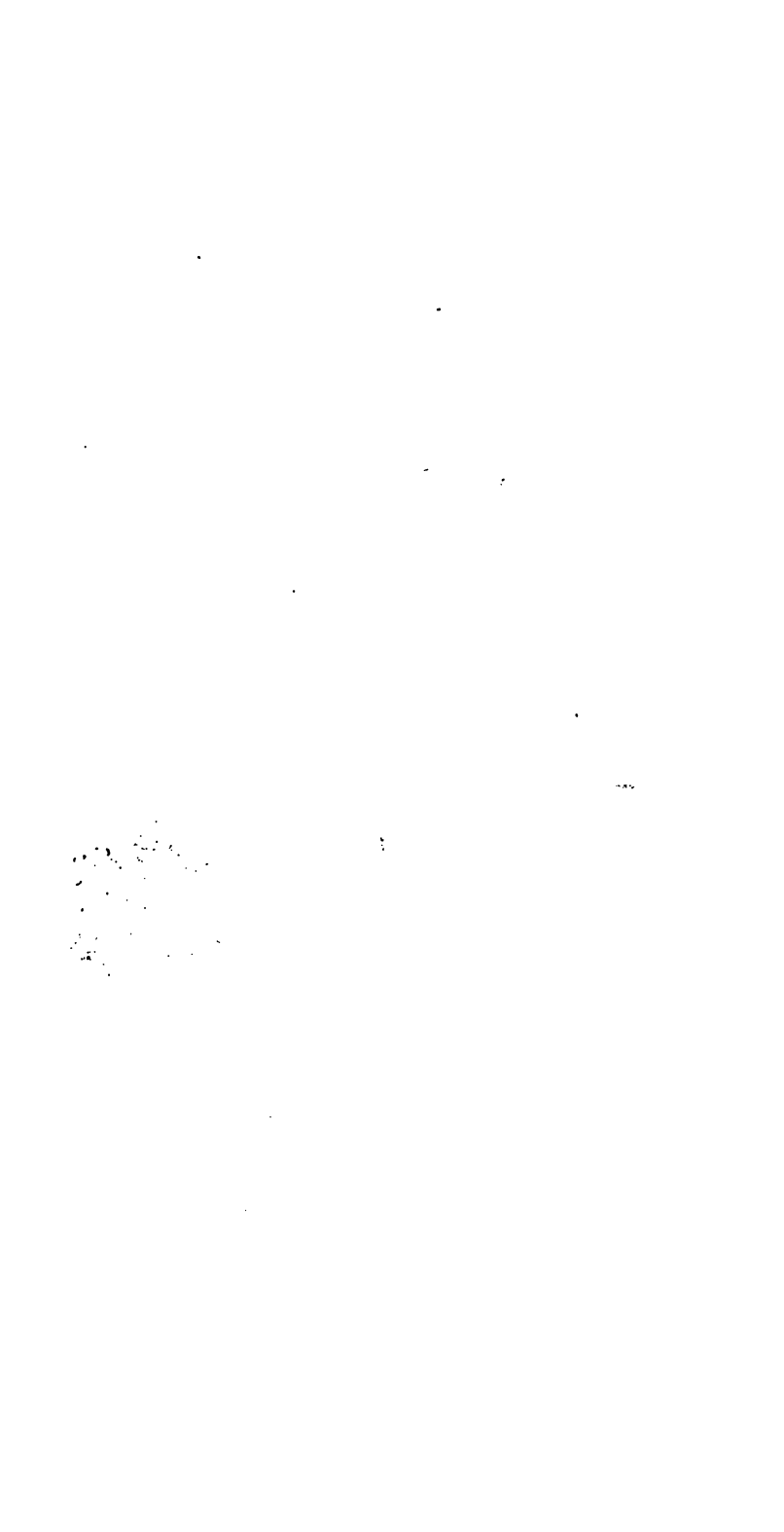
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LIFE OF MRS. NEWTON.



MEMORIALS
OF THE
LIFE OF MRS. NEWTON.

BY HER DAUGHTER



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PREFACE.

THIS little book owes its present form to the suggestion of a relative, who assisted me in looking over my mother's papers shortly after her death. Among those which had been laid aside, for many long years, we found the journal of her father, the late Captain Nodes, written about the middle of the last century; her own diary, extending from 1779 to 1865; her correspondence before her marriage; together with several interesting letters and documents relating to her early history, and to the family of her late husband. With these ample materials before me, I have attempted to sketch such a memoir as would be a faithful picture of her journeying heaven-ward, in faith and hope, amidst the joys and sorrows of

domestic life. The difficulty of making a selection from the diary was lessened by the unrestrained intercourse which I had shared with her for many years. Her voice of counsel is now for ever silent; but I learned to read the feelings of her heart, and I believe that I have written as under the guidance of the hand that has now returned to dust. However inadequately my part of the task has been performed, I know that, in the main, the following narrative would have met with her approval, though her Christian humility might have shrunk from any laudatory tribute whatever to her memory.

Perhaps some of the incidents related may seem trivial, and scarcely worth recording; but to judge fairly of the character of the truly good, we must not only view them on the high ground of spiritual communion with God, but follow them amid the scenes of daily life.

It must not be forgotten that the first years of Mrs. Newton's life were spent in worldly gaiety. Her early training was not religious; and the interest felt in her character is *heightened by the fact that*, in the bloom of

Preface.

vii

youth, surrounded by the flattery and attention of the votaries of fashion, and with the pleasures of the world within her grasp, she came to the cross of Christ, and joyfully accepted its reproach.

SHELLEY RECTORY,

March 11th, 1867.

LIFE OF MRS. NEWTON.

It has been said that "Biography is a struggle with death." Like sculpture, and painting, it is a feeble effort to perpetuate the living character that has departed from us,—to arrest the form we have loved before it begins to fade from the remembrance, and belongs to those things of the past which can only be recalled, as the fleeting imagery of a dream, in broken and disconnected fragments. We are not attempting to bring the life of ELIZABETH NEWTON before the public for its own sake merely : her memory belongs to the church. Some there are, even beyond her own immediate circle, who will welcome it, because for fifty-two years she was the dear and honoured companion of Robert Newton, of Roxby. Her history will inspire interest, as associated with his ; although "the story of their many years" seems already to belong to another generation *than this*,—so few are there remaining

who were included in the number of their personal friends. In her own case, life was prolonged much beyond the ordinary allotted period; and she seemed at last to live alone, surrounded by the memories of other days, and shut out by sickness and infirmity from intercourse with any but the members of her family.

Elizabeth Newton was the daughter of Captain John Nodes, (Nineteenth Infantry,) of Skelton, near York. On her father's side she was descended from a worthy line of ancestry, dating back to the time of Henry the Seventh, from whom the grant of family-arms to "his beloved friend John Nodes," of that remote age, was obtained. Her mother's maiden name was Sowter. Elizabeth—or Bessy, as she was always called in the family—was born September 3d, 1779, at Red-House, shortly before her father's removal to Skelton-Hall. She was the second child of her parents, her only brother being just two years older than herself. Little is known of her infancy and early childhood. It was passed in the happy seclusion of a country village; and the writer of this narrative has heard her speak of sundry childish treats and pleasures, well remembered in her serene old age,—of "riding pillion" to York, in company with her father,—of watching, from the *attic window*, the hounds meet at Skelton-Hall,

and seeing her little brother follow them on his donkey,—of going to the village-school with “Molly” her maid, where both were learners. Her first grief came early. There was a long interval of silence and watching in the house, very terrible to the young imagination. The servants moved to and fro noiselessly; “mamma” was never visible; and the doctor bustled about as if he were one of the family. Then came a mournful afternoon; and some one whispered, “Hush! your papa is dead.” Bessy screamed with terror; but, like a child, was easily pacified. Her little brother consoled her after his boyish fashion: “Never mind, Bessy; your mamma’s alive!” One of the servants be-thought him of her love for a ride in a wheelbarrow, and trundled her about in the open air. Thus she forgot her sorrows; for she was too young to know the loss she had sustained in the premature death of a parent.

Captain Nodes was a high-minded and consistent member of the Church of England; and from all that the writer can gather of his character, he had strong claims upon the affections of his child. He had maintained his principles amid scenes which presented much temptation; and, when surrounded by vicious and profane associates, had never forsaken the paths of truth and virtue. If we may judge from his diary, dated 1762, the army was not at that day a school of

high principle or morality. We are tempted to extract a few sentences from this interesting document, now in our hands, which show how entirely his mind was preserved from contamination, when surrounded by influences the most trying to inexperience and youth. They were written at Abrantes, where it appears his regiment was then quartered. After describing a drinking-party, from which he was compelled to retire in consequence of the violence of some young officers,—one of whom, after they had tried several mad species of amusement, even calling for a frying-pan and frizzling their watches, had wantonly stabbed his own servant,—he says, “Monday, February 14th. Drunkenness is our great crime. H—— and F—— have already destroyed one or two in this way. It amazes me to see G—— in this set. His character should be sufficient to prevent any man of honour from keeping company with him. But if a man wants to be respected by the *subs* of our regiment, he need only practise drinking, lying, swearing, and irreligion, and he will not fail of meeting with esteem, and being admired for his wit and parts.” Then follow some reflections upon the vanity of life: “These considerations should impress upon a man a sense, not only of the frailty and uncertainty of his existence, but how dependent he is upon a great and good God;—a God who

is entitled to all possible returns of duty from him, as a Preserver as well as a Creator. We concert great schemes for raising ourselves to honours, and plume ourselves upon the execution of grand designs, which, when seemingly ripe for execution, are, by the breaking of a single link in the chain, wholly defeated in a single day! This, also, is vanity. If a man will not wean himself from the world, the world will not wean itself from him. He may, perhaps, meet with a formal respect from the outward world; but if this is considered in no other light than as food for his pride, it is but a poor tribute in return for all his mental anxiety in obtaining it. Is it not a more profitable employment to establish a treasure in heaven that faileth not? to devote our short span upon earth in seeking to attain the mansions of eternal bliss? Let us seek to die the death of the righteous: then may we with humble confidence trust that we shall arrive at the blessed harbour where alone all sorrows cease."

After his marriage, and during his residence at Skelton, Captain Nodes was in the habit of spending much of his time in visiting the sick and poor. The old Prayer-Book is now before me which he carried in his hand in his daily walks, as also some of the medical receipts, according to which he was accustomed to ad-

minister to the sick. His death was occasioned by a severe attack of bilious fever. No notice has been preserved of anything that occurred during his illness; but we cannot doubt that he, like many others who do not rightly pronounce our *shibboleth*, died in the Lord. The following paragraph appeared in the York newspaper after his decease:—

“ On Friday evening died at Skelton-Hall, near this city, universally and deservedly regretted, John Nodes, Esquire, late of this city, Captain in His Majesty’s Nineteenth regiment of Foot; a gentleman highly respected by all who had the pleasure of his acquaintance. His death will be severely felt by the industrious in his neighbourhood, to whom he made it his daily study to be serviceable; and by the poor in particular, who have lost a liberal benefactor.”

Mrs. Nodes was a devoted wife and mother; but it seems that she had little sympathy with the religious views of her husband. After his death she lived in retirement, and appears to have lavished her affections and caresses with too much indulgence on her son and daughter. A widowed sister of her late husband, who at this time came to reside with her for a few years, soon made the discovery that John and Bessy were both “spoiled weans,” and persuaded her to send them off to school. Bessy

was placed under the care of Miss Buckle, who kept a school at York. This was another grievous trial of her childhood. "I thought," she says, in her autobiography, "that I should never see mamma again. I could not cry, but I used to sit alone and sob convulsively. At the end of the week the governess thought it best to comply with my request, and allow me to go home. A servant took me to Skelton in a post-chaise, and I spent the Sunday with mamma. I remember now, with deep feeling, how she carried me off to her room, lest my aunt and another lady-visiter should ridicule such sentimental indulgence;—how her tears fell upon my neck as I laid my head upon her bosom, and how she occasionally glanced at the churchyard where my father was buried;—how she coaxed and persuaded me to return to school, and expressed her wish that I should try to be happy there. I promised, and I kept my word. I soon forgot my troubles, and learned to delight in music and dancing, and in teasing my French-master, a poor refugee before the first Revolution. Well do I remember, at one of our little dancing *soirées*, meeting my mother's eye among a crowd of smartly-dressed ladies, and rushing forward to throw myself into her arms, forgetting where I was, till my polite dancing-master led me back blushing to my partner."



At the age of thirteen Bessy was permitted to return home, as it was intended that her education should be completed at a school at Crofton. But it was afterwards arranged that her studies should be continued under the direction of private masters, and in the companionship of her cousin, the only daughter of the widowed aunt already named. This young lady was most happily fitted to be her adopted sister; and an intimacy was at once formed between the two girls which, though they were separated at an early age, to walk in different paths, continued unbroken through life. The cousin had been but a few months in her grave when the earth closed over her surviving friend; and they are now, doubtless, re-united in the world where separation is unknown. The happy associations of their girlhood were often referred to by them during their long correspondence. No doubt Miss Nodes owed much of the vigour of her constitution to the sports in which these friends engaged in the open air. Young ladies could snow-ball each other, it appears, in those days; and play with a zest in the garden during a winter's frost without bonnet or tippet. Bessy could enjoy a merry gallop with her cousin over the Yorkshire moors, for twenty or thirty miles together, without fatigue. She speaks of riding *on horseback from Skelton to Scarborough, of*

following the hounds with her brother, and returning home to drink tea with her mother, as if the idea of exhausted nerves and over-exertion had never been heard of. On one occasion, accompanied by her cousin and Mrs. Nodes, she had strolled down to the woods to gather nuts. Some one told them that Prince George of Wales would pass, with some of his attendants, on his way to York. All were eager with expectation. Presently they caught the sound of horses' hoofs, and a party of gentlemen came cantering up. One of them, on seeing a lady with her two girls, instantly pulled up. After allowing his impatient horse to prance and caper until he had gratified their loyal curiosity, with a graceful wave of his hat he dashed off after his laughing companions. This was, in fact, the prince himself, as was apparent from the bright star shining on his breast.

About this time her brother John bought a commission in the army. The idea of seeing him in his scarlet coat pleased Bessy, but was not quite in harmony with the feelings of her mother. It seems that John had a dangerous illness in his infancy; and his father, in an agony of grief, rose from his bed, and solemnly vowed that if the boy's life were spared, he should be devoted to the service of God in the Church. It was vain, however, to remonstrate

with him. His guardians had consented that he should be a soldier; and a soldier he was resolved to become. His regiment was shortly ordered to Dublin; and he left home, having previously formed a matrimonial engagement with one of Bessy's school-mates.

During his absence his sister was invited to spend a season in town. She was just sixteen years of age; and the intention was that she should see a little of fashionable life in the great city before she was "introduced" at home. We need not speak of the time spent in preparing and dressing; or of her intense mortification, after her arrival, on hearing her aunt's tittering animadversions upon the character of her wardrobe. The mantua-makers at Skelton were a little behind the Regent-street Madame Elises of that day; and what bonnets, and tippets, and "green josephs" of that unfortunate wardrobe had to be sacrificed, or remodelled, before Bessy was pronounced to be at all "presentable!" This was her first step in fashionable folly.

It seems strange to us, with our railways, that a journey from York to London could have been attended with hazard so late as the year 1795. But so it was. Miss Nodes met with a little adventure on this occasion which may give us a passing glance into the disagreeables of the old stage-coach in which our grand-

mothers travelled. She left home with her mother to pass the night at the "Swan," in York; rose at six, and was placed inside the coach, under the protection of the guard. Two young gentlemen, and a person calling herself a "sailor's widow," were her companions. One of the gentlemen shortly began to pay marked and disagreeable attention to Miss Bessy; but she suffered so much from sickness, occasioned by the tedious motion of the coach, that she scarcely noticed it. On the second day, however, the other gentleman called her aside, and told her to be on her guard; as he knew that their companion was trying to arrange that she should leave the coach and travel alone in a post-chaise with the "sailor's widow." At the same time he gave her his card, "The Chisholm," and told her to consider herself under his protection until her friends met her in town. Thus she escaped further molestation. It was three days before she reached the inn in London. She was met, at length, by her uncle, and her little troubles were at an end.

Miss Nodes spent her time in town much like other ladies of her age and position in life; going to church on Sunday, with a drive in the parks afterwards, and in the ensuing week paying a succession of morning visits, and finishing with evening entertainments.

She sung, and played, and danced; heard the *prima donna* of that day, and went to Ascot races. At Windsor she saw the venerable King George and his homely queen, with their fine family of sons and daughters; and, more than this, she heard him say, as she passed on the arm of her uncle, and gazed at royalty, "York, York, York! Did ye ever see such a fine woman in your life?" No vulgar compliment, though her uncle hurried her away to the carriage. Some half dozen admirers now surrounded her, and to more than one of them her hand was nearly engaged. But, at last, she returned to Skelton, where she was welcomed by her soldier-brother. A wedding shortly ensued in the family. Her cousin, her early companion, was about to be married. Bessy was bridesmaid. As a record of old customs, it may be mentioned that the bridal-party was met at the gate of their rural home by a servant carrying a basket of bride-cake. This the bride scattered to the crowd, along with a shower of silver. A dinner at Thorp-Arch followed; and then the interesting companion of her girlhood departed with her husband, and the two friends did not meet again till many bright summers had passed.

About this period she was introduced to the *York assemblies* by the lady of Sir G——

P——; and under her guardianship, as Mrs. Nodes still declined to enter into society herself, she spent many of her evenings, either at the theatre, or some other place of recreation. In her own neighbourhood again she received not a little attention; and it was only through a singular circumstance that she did not accept the hand of a clergyman, a gentleman in affluent circumstances, one of the canons, it is believed, of the cathedral. After showing his mind in various ways, and paying not a little court to Miss Nodes, this gentleman asked permission to call upon her mother, in order to obtain her consent to the proposed union. Leave was granted, and a day was fixed; for though Miss Nodes could scarcely as yet regard him as more than a friend, she saw no reason why she might not in time indulge a more tender feeling towards him. The clock struck, and the suitor was at the door of Skelton-Hall according to his appointment; but the young lady with her mother had wandered down to the river-side. He met them in the course of half-an-hour, as they returned; when his formal bow, and curt “I perfectly understand this, madam,” admitted of no explanation, and for a time the parties lost sight of each other.

Amid the buoyancy of youth, and the gaieties in which she took part, she had not noticed the failing health of her brother. But death was

soon to throw a shadow over the happy circle at Skelton. Mr. John Nodes was becoming daily weaker. The deceitful disease, consumption, induced, indeed, by his own early follies, was fast gaining upon him, though his friends fondly closed their eyes to the truth. His fine face was growing daily more wan, and his step less firm. He read his Prayer-Book, and was thoughtful and resigned. This, unfortunately, is all we know of his soul's inner life as he drew near to the gates of the invisible world. The family had retired to rest one night, still persuading themselves that he might be spared to them, when he died suddenly and alone; except that he was attended by one of his men, a young Irish soldier, who folded his hands, and covered his face with the sheet.

The mother and sister were overwhelmed with grief. They sat for long days brooding over their loss. The summer's sun and the sweet melodies of nature—the singing of the birds, and the gentle rustle of the trees around the house in the breeze—only oppressed them. “I have known grief,” says Mrs. Newton in her diary, “but never grief like that.” Yet she felt she must rouse herself to attend to her mother, whose health also for a time threatened to give way. The sorrow of both seemed hopeless; but after a short interval of mourning they repaired to Scarborough, where their spirits appear

to have revived a little. A year passed away. Miss Nodes had resumed her usual gaiety, and had entered into her accustomed pursuits. But still they felt lonely; and began to think of a change of residence, in the hope that freshness of scene might help them to forget their loss. They decided to leave Skelton; and, after spending the winter in town, to fix themselves in the neighbourhood of Ludlow, where they had then some distant relatives.

Another visit to London was accordingly arranged, and another wardrobe prepared, with, we suppose, more success. The boxes were already forwarded, and the furniture of the house was partially packed: Mrs. Nodes and her daughter only stayed to go into the quiet churchyard, and take a last look at the grave of their beloved John in the church. But now, a new era in her life commenced; and an event occurred which was destined to influence the whole character of her future history, giving a totally different direction to her hopes and purposes. While she was planning with her mother how she could pleasantly trifle away the priceless life which God had given her, it pleased Him, in His goodness, to point out to her the true and living way to that blessed home which, we may venture to hope, her departed brother had found in his lonely hours. A light was now rising which should

cheer her path through a long life, and “melt at last into the light of heaven.”

A widow lady was an occasional visiter in the neighbourhood of Skelton, whose son-in-law was, at this time, the non-resident rector of the parish. She was noticed for the singular plainness of her dress, and for her mixing little with the society around her; lodging at a farm-house occupied by one of her tenants, a Methodist, and spending her time in quiet home occupations. Mrs. P—— was a Moravian, the intimate friend of La Trobe, and many others whose names have long been household words in the church. Her granddaughter, afterwards Lady Ann G——, was with her on the occasion of this visit, and introduced her to Miss Nodes, who appeared to be interested in her pleasing conversation. A short time before they left Skelton Mrs. P—— called to ask, as she said, “a favour.” She wished Miss Nodes to use her influence with the curate to allow a gentleman, “a regularly-ordained clergyman,” she said, to “take the duty” some Sunday evening at Skelton church. Miss Nodes wondered she had not made the request to her own son-in-law, and that the stranger-clergyman should desire to take the “duty” for his own gratification. She did not then know that Mrs. P—— was called a “*Methodist*,”—a term of reproach which, at *that time*, was hurled indiscriminately at all

earnest religious people; and that, as such, she had little influence with her son-in-law. The request was easily granted, however. The curate gave his permission, and the Rev. Mr. Michison was invited to officiate on the following Sunday evening. It is not surprising that Miss Nodes, after seeing that lights were provided in the church, which had never before been lighted for public worship in the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the village, determined to go there herself that night, and hear this stranger-clergyman. It was a still autumnal evening as she passed in the sombre hour of twilight the grave, within the pew, of her beloved brother. As the service proceeded she became deeply interested in the energetic manner of the new preacher. A hymn was sung. As a substitute for "Sternhold and Hopkins," Mr. Michison introduced the now well-known hymn of Charles Wesley,—

"Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness," &c.

The sermon was, it is believed, from the second verse of the twelfth chapter of Isaiah: "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid." Miss Nodes left the church with new and altered purposes. She was surprised,—was anxious. She was perplexed; and begged that the journey to London might be postponed, and that Mrs. P—— would request Mr. Michison to visit Skelton again. "I thought," she said to

her friend, "that I was very good before; but this preacher thought otherwise of us all. I believed I was perfectly righteous, as far as human nature permitted. I used to read a prayer night and morning. I attended church regularly, once on the Sunday; and I believed I had as good a heart as any of my acquaintance."

Mr. Michison came again; and Miss Nodes thus describes the effect of his second sermon upon herself: "I thought that everything he said was levelled at my own heart. The word came with power. Before I went to church I had been afraid of exciting the ridicule of my acquaintance if I yielded to my new convictions; but such fears fled before the power of truth. Kneeling down in the church, I vowed that if God would show me the right way, I would forsake *all* for Christ's sake. I returned home, and found a party of friends at the house, talking on indifferent subjects. I wondered they could think of anything but their own souls. I longed to be alone; and, when I could retire to my own room, I poured forth my feelings before God. I no longer sought to merit the pardon of sin, but implored it for Christ's sake. I did not venture to tell anyone of what was passing in my mind, as I had never heard of anyone feeling like myself. I had never heard of '*conversion*,'—of the '*new birth*.' I knew

not what to ask God for ; but my constant prayer was for the Holy Spirit, which I knew was promised to those that sought Him. I now began to read the New Testament, to see if these things were so. I threw away my songs, and gave up my old amusements ;—not because I thought them wrong, but because I no longer found pleasure in them. I often experienced great pleasure in prayer, but never retained it long. At length, after reading the twelfth chapter of Isaiah, I enjoyed such inward peace as the saints of Christ can only imagine. With humble confidence I looked up to God as a reconciled Father. From that blessed hour everything I saw, or heard, or read, appeared different. I felt the comfort of possessing a salvation through faith alone. The plan of redemption, through Christ, seemed so suited to my case, that it filled me with astonishment and love ! For some months I enjoyed ‘ a heaven below ; ’ but I soon found that I had a battle to fight, and that life must be a warfare.”

From this date the story of her life is told in a collection of papers, forming a voluminous diary. It is a record of daily experience, a highly interesting autobiography, in fact ; from which, however, we shall here make but brief selections. We may anticipate that the much talked of journey to London was abandoned. Mrs. Nodes kindly yielded to her daughter’s wish to continue at

Skelton, although, it must be confessed, she was sorry to see the sudden change in her character. Mr. Michison formed her acquaintance, and recommended her to read Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and Romaine's "Walk of Faith;" at the same time giving her encouragement and advice. Mr. Hemington, the vicar of Thorp-Arch, also called upon her; and from his sympathy and instructive conversation she derived much benefit. This gentleman was as eccentric as her friend Mr. Michison. He used to ride to Skelton church to take an evening-service after the completion of his own duties, and then canter back in the dark, with a carriage-lamp strapped to each boot. On one occasion he told her that his irregularity had often offended the archbishop, (the late Dr. Markham,) and that he had said to him, "I will take your gown from you, Hemington, if you are not more careful!" to which he had answered the good-humoured prelate, "Very well, your Grace; I can preach without it, you know, I have so often tried." Miss Nodes once consulted him on the subject of her old associates. She wanted to know how she was to shut out her irreligious acquaintance, and avoid conformity to the world. Mr. Hemington laughed at her fears. "Go on as you do, and there is not one of them that will come near you." The *sequel* showed that his judgment was right.

Her relatives, indeed, remonstrated with her; and for a time she was haunted with the fear that her guardian might induce her mother to place her in a lunatic asylum. But she was soon left to follow out what they believed her career of "fanaticism;" while Mrs. Nodes, with tears in her eyes, would say, "Do anything, my child, that will make you happy." But she received one letter of remonstrance at this time which, though somewhat harsh, is worthy of notice. It was from an aunt, the wife of a clergyman, who begged her to consider that duty required her "to remember the feelings of others, to exercise a wholesome spirit of self-denial in the choice of her companions, as there were ties of blood and affinity as well as bonds of Christian brotherhood; and that perhaps it might become her to pause, before she committed herself to any eccentric course of conduct, lest the tempter might beguile her, and she should be led on by the love of display rather than the love of God." But her niece had escaped from the world's enthralling bondage, and could not understand the caution of any who would, however judiciously, warn her against extremes. Perhaps, she did run into some little extravagances at this early part of her religious career; but they were rather attributable to her enthusiastic natural temperament, than to the influence of religion itself. Further experience

sobered down anything that was distasteful to others, until there was developed in her, under the Divine teaching, a character remarkable for its Christian simplicity and retiring home-virtues.

We now see the young convert assembling the village people to prayers in the hall at Skelton, that she might teach, read, and pray with them on the Sunday evening. All is changed in the old house. Her favourite horse is sold, and his mistress has doffed the scarlet riding-habit for the sober livery of her friend Mrs. P——. The spinnet is still heard in the oak-panelled dining-room; but the voice of song is the voice of praise in psalms and spiritual hymns. Miss Nodes rises at six o'clock that she may visit the sick and poor; then she returns to read and pray with the servants. Her breakfast is despatched in a spirit of self-denial worthy of Ignatius Loyola; not that she believes in the merit of self-sacrifice, but that she may more abundantly minister to the wants of others. Thus, the day passes; and before the close of evening she invites the young girls to the house to talk to them about God, and Christ, and eternity,—the assembly being dismissed with a hymn, which she has herself composed. William, the old man-servant, who has followed her father and her brother to the grave, brings in his violin, *and accompanies* the young voices with some

quaint tune, familiar at the time, and often to the following words :—

“ Vain world ! I courted once thy smiles,
Was led a captive in thy toils,
Nor saw nor felt my chain ;
When lo ! a ray of heavenly light
Reveal'd to my astonish'd sight
My misery and pain.

“ His love with confidence inspired,
And all my soul with ardour fired,
To walk the sacred road ;
To tread the steps Christ trod before,
To glory in the cross He bore,
And only live to God ! ”

The extracts from her diary about this date display the ardour of her devotion and zeal. “ Happily, happily doth this month open upon me ! Bright are my prospects, fervent my hopes, joyful my heart. Be Thou, O Lord, for ever my delight. Bitter to my taste be every object that would alienate my affections from Thee, my sole source of inward joy ! Let nothing share the heart where Thou alone shouldst dwell. Let earthly love be but one little ray compared with what I feel for Thee. O boundless mercy ! O infinite love ! Rely wholly upon God, O my soul ; and trust in the merits of thy glorious Advocate, in whom thou canst stand secure amid the tumult of temptation and of passion. Each moment I experience some renewed token of the Lord's favour and fatherly protection, and \

joyfully leave my all in His hands. I tremble when I look at my own weakness; but I feel strong in His all-sufficient might. O that I may be made an instrument of good to the souls of others!"

* * * *

She visited her Moravian friends at Fulneck this year, and was permitted to attend a "single sisters'" lovefeast. The seclusion and quiet of the settlement were in harmony with her taste; and she speaks of it as "heaven upon earth." But her attachment to the Church in which she had been brought up was then too strong to allow her to think of joining any other religious community. She had, however, consulted Mr. Hemington on the propriety of attending the Methodist "meeting-house." He did not object to it, considering the Methodists of that day as a society within the Church, rather than a distinct body of Christians. About this time she happened, in her visits amongst the poor, to meet with a sewing-girl in the village who was a Methodist, with whom she eagerly entered into conversation. She had heard of the Methodists through her Moravian friend Mrs. P——, who spoke of them with affection and interest. The account of the death of John Wesley she had read in a newspaper, when she *was a child*. On asking her mother who he

was, and what "Methodists" were, she was told "they were good sort of people; but that they thought it their duty to run about praying and preaching, and neglecting their families." With this people, however, she was now about to become better acquainted. The sewing-girl, as Miss Nodes afterwards learned, was by no means a fair example of the Society to which she belonged; but she said that there was an old man amongst them "who preached like St. Paul," mentioning also a young one, who, as described by her, must have deserved the designation of a "Son of Thunder." "And how do they live?" asked Miss Nodes. "They go from house to house where they take in preachers," said the girl; adding, "Mr. Burd-sall will preach at meeting next time." Miss Nodes determined to hear "St. Paul," as he had been described to her, on the following Sunday. As to the earnest and popular young minister, of whose talents she had heard such a glowing description, we believe she dismissed all idea of either seeing or hearing him, albeit he was destined hereafter to influence so largely her future life. It is evident that the thought of marriage was at this time distant from her mind.

The Rev. G— C— desired, indeed, to renew the former intimacy, after hearing of her altered character; but his proposal was firmly, though

politely, declined. "She would never marry: her resolution was fixed:" and thus the intercourse finally terminated. "Let not any created being come between my soul and Thee, O glorious Saviour," was the language of her heart, as expressed in her diary of this date. "O, my Lord, from what an abyss of misery hast Thou delivered me! Let my soul ever aspire after Thee, its proper centre." . . . "I desire the glory of God supremely."

The person who had been canonized by one of his hearers as another St. Paul was a Methodist exhorter or "local preacher." He kept, it is said, a small shop at the corner of Micklegate, York. But whatever his earthly occupation, he was a servant of God, who lived in the spirit of apostolic Christianity,—a man of faith and prayer, and a worthy representative of a race of village-preachers that we trust will never die out in Methodism. He knew nothing of book-learning, save what he found in that one Book, which is the fountain of heavenly wisdom; but God had trained him for His service, and endowed him with gifts passing the power of human culture to impart. Those were days of moral darkness, both in the world and in the Established Church. Mr. Burdsall, or "Dicky Burdsall," as he was usually called, had no prescribed district in which he pursued his Master's work. He went

from hamlet to hamlet, preaching the kingdom of God, wherever he could obtain a room in a cottage. Sometimes his quaint figure might be seen rising above the heads of a motley crowd on the village-green, calling sinners to repentance. He was not a stranger at Skelton, though Miss Nodes had never heard his name mentioned. In her infancy he had applied to Captain Nodes for leave to open a chapel or "meeting" there, but had been denied; although, as the old man afterwards told her, "I'll be bound his heart was with us; for he turned about, and could not look me in the face when he said me 'nay.'"

Some years after Captain Nodes's death, permission was obtained, through the influence of Mrs. P—, we believe; and it was to this "meeting" that Miss Nodes went to hear Mr. Burdsall. His homely sermon made a great impression upon her. The earnestness of his manner was heightened by his simple, broad, Yorkshire dialect. He spoke as "a dying man to dying men;" and when the little company rose at the close of the service, and joined in singing the hymn ending with—

"We then shall meet to part no more,"

overwhelmed by her feelings, she sank into her seat weeping aloud. She was thinking of her brother John, hoping that in his solitary study

of the New Testament he had found rest in the love of the same blessed Saviour in whom she now trusted. Her last interview with him recurred to her memory, when he asked her to write down the names of those to whom he wished to send some token of affection after he was gone; and she was ready to reproach herself for having hurried from the room, unable to bear the idea of separation. Had she remained, and ventured to converse with him, might she not have learned that the secret of his resignation was his reliance upon the Lord Jesus Christ?

When about to leave, Mr. Burdsall took her hand in both of his, saying, with a fervour and solemnity she never forgot, "The Lord bless you!"

She returned home to beg that Mrs. Nodes would allow her to invite this servant of God to the house; to which consent was reluctantly given. From this time Mr. Burdsall became her spiritual adviser and valued friend. His advanced age had given him wisdom, and his deep devotional feeling fitted him to appreciate her earnestness and religious fervour.

A pious lady, who attended the ministry of the Rev. — Richardson, at York, now called upon her, and requested her "to unite herself with their private religious meetings, and *endeavour to attend* Mr. Richardson's church as

often, as she conveniently could." Miss Nodes asked if he "would forbid her to attend the Methodist meetings;" to which the lady replied, injudiciously we think, that he would. "Then I cannot join his church," was the decided answer: "I have few opportunities of hearing the truth; and I could not bear to give up my occasional attendance at the 'meeting.'" She steadily refused to take a Society-ticket, however, or openly identify herself with the Methodists; being still warmly attached to the Church of England, and as yet unable to realise the great truth that Christ's Holy Catholic Church is one in Him, united in the bonds of a mystic fellowship,—that as there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism," so there is but one living Christian family, in heaven and earth. Richard Burdsall was not a little pleased with her resolution. "Mr. Richardson is a true man of God," said he,—for he was no bigot,—"but he is no'but stiff, and, may-be, 'thou would be hindered in thy usefulness, my lass;" (for after this plain fashion did he invariably address the young convert;) "yet I love the man dearly. I met him t'other day in a back-street in York, doing the Master's work. I said, 'Bless you, Brother Richardson! Give us a wag of thy hand here, in this back-street: there's nobody here 'll see us, and we are *fighting* under the same Captain.'"

Miss Nodes's interest in the Methodists increased as she continued to attend their services, so that even her friend Mr. Hemington, whose catholic spirit seems to have been at that time remarkable, remonstrated with her. "Go to hear their preachers occasionally," he advised; "but do not *join* the Society. Their care for you will decrease when they think you are one of them, and they will lose sight of you when they conceive you are safe:" and for a time she yielded to him.

A severe accident now befell her, which confined her for some months to a sick room. She was walking to the neighbouring village of Shipton, to attend the afternoon service in the church, and hear her first religious instructor, Mr. Michison, when, in climbing a gate, she fell, and broke her leg. She was carried back to the Hall in a fainting state. The weather was unusually hot, and in her pain and weariness she thought there was a probability that she might die. This filled her with ecstatic joy, and caused her to long for her departure. "O, to be at rest," she exclaimed, "to be ever with the Lord! to be permitted to join the choirs of angels and archangels before the throne!" The following passages in her diary were written at this date:—

"Dull, tedious, and insipid to me are the *hours or moments* spent without opportunity of

intercourse with my Maker. With you, O ye blessed throng, who are continually before the throne, ascribing glory to Him that sitteth upon it, and to the ‘Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,’—with you, I would join my humble tribute of thanksgiving! ‘O magnify the Lord with me,’ ye saints and servants of the Lord; ‘let us magnify His name together.’ I lay in darkness, and in the shadow of death, when, lo! a heavenly voice called me to joy and light. Trembling, I obeyed; but, ah, the sweets of love Divine! the length and breadth which still I hope to prove! True, a thousand dangers threaten; but what are they to me? My strength is Omnipotence itself. My ‘times are in His hands’ who created all things, and by whom all things consist. Shout and sing, ye troubled souls of the earth; your Captain fights for you, and our victory will be divine. With such a Leader shall we shrink?

‘Fearless each enemy we’ll brave,
Smile at death’s sting, defy the grave,
Burst every bond, through Him, and rise
To meet Him in the flaming skies.’

“I have chosen Thee, O holy Jesus, as my heart’s portion. I pant to do Thy will. O, let me ever love and adore Thee!” She shortly recovered, and thus describes her feelings:—

“Welcome, sweet angel of returning Health !
Dearer than earthly honours, or than wealth ;
Dearest of joys mortality can prove,
Dearer than all but my Redeemer’s love !
And yet, thou sweet, thou soul-enlivening guest,
Reluctantly, I hail thee to my breast !
Had thy gay form a little longer fled
The cold embraces of a sinking bed,
These eyes had now in other scenes explored
Regions of aerial light, and seen the Lord !
Yet, gentle foe, I welcome thee again,
And smile, though still a captive in life’s chain.—
I take thee as a boon my Lord has given,
Though I would fain resign thee, for a call to heaven.”

Several other poetical pieces, expressive of her intense desire to “depart and be with Christ,” were evidently written during her confinement to her room and convalescence. The one subjoined was on her going to Communion, and is headed, “Written previous to going to the Lord’s table.”

“A helpless creature goes to meet
And worship at her Saviour’s feet ;
Nay, more, she goes to share the board,
And hold communion with her Lord !
His flesh the meat, the drink His blood,
Banquet divine, the Spirit’s food !
O, come, blest Lord, my soul prepare,
To meet Thy gracious presence there !”

She adds, “Now I am Thine, and Thou art mine, my rest and my inheritance, my soul’s *portion* ! Cast out every earthly object, and

consecrate me to Thyself. Can this heart ever throw off its allegiance to Thee? What misery is the thought! But, no, it cannot be. Where is there an allurement capable of withdrawing thy affections from the source of all happiness?

“ My soaring soul would rise to Thee,
Rise to a bless'd eternity!
Would sigh away this fleeting breath,
And bare this breast to welcome death.”

There was a religious service held at York, in the spring of the year 1802, in connexion with the annual District-Meeting. Miss Nodes was invited by her worthy friend “ Dicky Burdsall ” to “ hear preaching; ” and, hoping to meet there a pious Methodist, a lady then residing at the village of Alne, she determined, if possible, to be present in the afternoon. She went accordingly; and now followed events that seem to belong rather to the domain of romance than of sober truth. She was seated in a pew in the front of the gallery, in company with the lady whom she had met, and, lost in deep devotional feeling, was endeavouring to enter into the spirit of the service. An involuntary impression, however, came over her, that, despite her choice of a single life, if she raised her eyes she would see her future husband. The feeling was repressed, but it returned. She at length raised her eyes, just as

a tall young man, attired in the style of an English yeoman, walked hurriedly from the chapel-door to the vestry. He took no part in the religious service; and she drove home in the evening without seeing him again, or hearing of him.

In the course of a day or two Mr. Burdsall sent a message, asking her to a small "tea-drinking" with two or three of the "stranger-preachers." Miss Nodes would gladly have accepted this invitation, but Mrs. Nodes objected. "My dear," she said, "it is not proper that you should meet any society that Mr. Burdsall should please to invite. I should not like you to hurt the old man's feelings; but I will drive to York with you, and call and explain that you have an engagement." They called together, and were ushered into a little back-parlour. There were assembled Mr. Burdsall himself, Mrs. Burdsall, their daughter, and one or two more; and with them, no other than the young minister Miss Nodes had seen at the chapel. This was ROBERT NEWTON, at that time a Methodist preacher residing at Pocklington. Mrs. Nodes made her apology for declining the invitation sent to her daughter, and was about to retire;—"But we were just going to prayers," said Mrs. Burdsall; "and, surely, you would not *hinder* Miss Nodes from joining us before you

leave." She "thought," to use her own words, "these good people would think her very wicked if she did;" and she consented to stay. "Let us sing a hymn," said Mr. Newton; and he began the verse, "Away, my needless fears," accompanying the party with his deep bass to a familiar tune. The young preacher then prayed. On rising to take leave, Miss Nodes stepped forward, saying, "We live by begging at Skelton, Mr. Newton; and shall be grateful if you will give us a sermon on some occasion."

Mr. Newton called at Skelton the following morning. He was introduced by Mr. Burdsall, and took a service in the "meeting-house" in the evening. He had no other interview with Miss Nodes until after he had offered her his hand and heart.

Those who remember anything of Robert Newton will not think we judge partially when we say that few have possessed his rare natural gifts. In person he was remarkably handsome; but the charm of his manner,—his easy carriage, his musical voice, and agreeable conversation, can only be imagined by those who enjoyed his personal friendship. He was the third son of a plain Yorkshire farmer. In youth he was thoughtless and giddy; but, under the teaching of the Methodists, especially that of his gifted sister, Mary, he was early led to the

knowledge of the truth, and became a preacher. His first sermon was delivered in a cottage, not far from his birthplace, on the sea-coast. He soon displayed indications of talent, and in 1799 was called to the Methodist ministry. From the beginning of his career, he was useful and beloved. He left his father's house for his first Circuit, Pocklington, with only a horse and a pair of saddle-bags. Before he had ridden across the bleak moor, on the Whitby coast, he dismounted, overpowered with a sense of the responsibility of his new office as a preacher of the Gospel. There, kneeling down in the wild solitude, he poured out his soul before God, and invoked His help. The sphere of his labour embraced a great number of agricultural villages, extending to the Yorkshire wolds. To these he was accustomed to ride, taking up his abode at some farmhouse or cottage-homestead where the people "took in preachers." In few of these places was there any stated house of worship, and he preached in barns, or in cottage-kitchens, in workshops, or in the open air; and crowds of villagers flocked to listen, of whom not a few learned to put away the evil of their doings and to follow Christ.

At the time of his meeting with Miss Nodes, Mr. Newton was in his nineteenth year. The "*course of their love*" did not always "run

smooth," as may be imagined. Mrs. Nodes objected to the proposed union. Her uncle and guardian wrote a severe and alarming letter, which gave Miss Nodes much uneasiness. On different grounds, her kind counsellor, Mr. Hemington, rode over to Skelton to remonstrate with her. "I hear," he said, "that you are likely to be connected with the Methodists; to be intimately connected with them." Miss Nodes owned at once that the rumour was in accordance with facts, but assured him she should remain an attached member of the Church of England. "I dare say you think so; and Mr. Newton may be of your opinion at present. But remember Methodism is in its infancy: it is now a sect within the Church; but it will soon become a separate and distinct body, and young men of another generation will rise up and form another communion of Dissenters." Miss Nodes, however, held fast to her own opinion; and to his parting observation, "It is very likely this marriage may never take place, after all," she firmly replied, "It will not be my fault if it does not." Mr. Hemington continued his intimacy with her after she became Mrs. Newton, and on more than one occasion invited her husband to preach in his own school-room at Thorp-Arch.

Mr. Burdsall, her other spiritual adviser, did

all in his power, on the contrary, to encourage Mr. Newton and herself in the course on which they had resolved. "My lad," said he, "I would marry her if we were both turned out of doors in rags!" And when Miss Nodes came to him with her scruples and difficulties about leaving the Church of England, he had his own way of silencing her: "Thou canst not overthrow the Lord's work. What hast thou to do with the future?" She at length joined the Methodist Society. On this she remarks, "Though tremblingly, I took a ticket, and joined the Society previous to our union; not wishing to have any feeling of difference as to our duties, and under the most sacred vows of my own heart, relying on God's help, to be an aid and not a hindrance to His servant. Since then many have been my failures; but I have not, I trust, willingly deviated from the solemn covenant I then made with my merciful Redeemer."

The year preceding her marriage was one of great religious activity. She went about from cottage to cottage, talking to the villagers of God's love and mercy. Mr. Newton was, of course, often with her; and it would appear from her diary that she was afraid lest her affection for him should encroach too much upon the time she had devoted to God. "Alas!" she complains, "am I not setting an *idol on Thy throne*? Am I not in danger of

forsaking the living fountains of waters, that I may drink deep of earth's broken cistern? Mr. N— was with me to-day; and I had to reproach myself with vain and unprofitable thoughts, with spiritual languor. O, when wilt Thou comfort me!" She made known her feelings to her kind adviser, Mr. Hemington, and was encouraged by his reply: "God deals thus with His own children. Depravity daily unfolds itself to us, as we are able to bear the sight of it. We could not at first bear to see ourselves as we are in God's sight; but in proportion as we grow in grace, and loathe ourselves, Christ appears altogether lovely. By a continual application to Him for His promised help, we shall be enabled to maintain the conflict, even to the end." They united in prayer, and her heart joined in the excellent minister's request that, "whatever became of her in this world, she might enjoy the smile of God, and be led by Him through life unto salvation." Another page in the diary, and we find her thus alluding to the letters of her intended husband: "I never write to Mr. Newton, or open his letters, without previous prayer; nor do I often open them without finding an answer to prayer in the contents. It was peculiarly so this evening. I fell on my knees, and with tears adored the goodness of God for His continued care over him, and for the hope that we should

be helps to each other in the way to eternal life. I went afterwards to church, and at the table of the Lord asked Him to order my goings, and to accept the dedication I made of myself to His service. I felt a sweet confidence that I should behold one day that Redeemer, whose love I was commemorating, to dwell with Him for ever. We had a singing-meeting in the evening, and my soul seemed to rest on ‘the Rock of Ages.’ ”

Again: “I received a letter from Mr. Newton. The Lord is confirming His work with him, and he thinks he is making progress in the Divine life. O, how shall I adore the Disposer of events, who has power to make us helps to each other!”—We may imagine her walking to class on the eve of the same day, as appears from the diary, to meet her venerable friend Mr. Burdsall, and listening to his quaint admonitions. On the fly-leaf of the manuscript from which we have extracted these sentences, there is an entry in a hand-writing unknown to the writer of this narrative: “Ah, spare your idol; think him human still. Charms he may have, but he has frailties too. Doat not too much, nor spoil what you admire.” No doubt the hand which penned these words has now long crumbled into dust; and whether the caution was given by Mr. Hemington, or faithful Mr. *Burdsall*, we cannot decide.

A considerable interval intervened between her engagement with Mr. Newton and her marriage. The whole of their correspondence during this period has been preserved. We pass over the earlier letters, and transcribe some of the passages which refer not only to their relation to each other, but to the church in whose prosperity they both felt so deep an interest.

MR. NEWTON TO MISS NODES.

“ Howden, June 10th, 1801.

“ You ask whether the thoughts of past pleasure give more pain or enjoyment to the mind? I think this depends upon circumstances. If the pleasure we have enjoyed be for ever gone, the retrospect will be painful. But if we have reason to expect that the same circumstances will occur again, and we may hope to judge of the future by the past, our reflections of the past must be agreeable. My imagination is fertile enough to unite past and present, and fancy seems to realise the absent. How delightful is friendship when it is cemented by mutual sympathy and sanctified by genuine piety! Let us press towards the mark, keeping the prize in view and the promised land. We are strangers and pilgrims here: let us aspire after our native heaven.—As Mr. Burdsall will be with you on the Thursday, I will defer my visit to the Tuesday.”

[*Not dated.*]

“How often during my late attack [of measles, attended with considerable danger, owing to the symptoms of putrid fever displayed] did I think of you! It seemed as if, were you only with me, and my work was done, I should have no desire to stay. In what a light did I see the world in those moments! A stately bark on dangerous seas, or a mole-hill, and its eager inhabitants like so many ants swarming about it! I saw and felt religion in a clearer manner than I had ever done before. ‘Virtue has majesty in death.’ My mind was much affected by hearing the people in the town inquiring constantly if I was likely to get better. I thought, ‘What am I, that they feel so much interest in a poor worm?’ What a poor loiterer I have been in the Lord’s vineyard!—how little have I done for Him! May He help me to live more for eternity. Ere long the curtain will be drawn aside, and the wall will break away that separates earth from heaven.

‘Faith lends her realising light,
The clouds disperse.’”

The next letter is dated,

“*Leeds, July 31st.*

“I HAVE been in Leeds three or four days. We had a capital sermon from Mr. Henry Moore. I wish you had heard him. I have

heard many of my brethren preach ; and I have also seen the words of the inspired writer verified, ‘ The fear of man bringeth a snare.’ The brethren are assembling.”

This letter was evidently written from the Leeds Conference chapel, in 1801.

“MY dear friend’s welcome letter,” Miss Nodes says, in her answer,—dated “ Skelton, August 3d, 1801,”—“was brought to me this morning ; and having been asked ‘ my commands in Leeds,’ I gladly avail myself of replying immediately. While with your fathers and brethren in Christ, may your soul be stored with Divine knowledge, and filled with ‘ the fulness of God !’ I need not say I shall be glad to see and hear you at Skelton on your return. Our villagers are such a good sort of people, they need no reformation ! Alas, how the heart deceives itself ! To-morrow I am going to Friby. I have not had the opportunity of conversing with Mrs. W—— since my change of sentiments, and I go very unwillingly. You will pray for me.”

“MR. JOHNSON spent the afternoon with us this day last week, and preached in the evening. The time passed away delightfully. My mind, since we parted, has been stayed much upon God, and my soul aspires to a continual intercourse with its Redeemer. Still let us press

on, strong in His might, despising every impediment and every difficulty. Our military friend, whom you saw here, frequently calls upon us, so frequently as to be rather painful to me; for I am sure it would not be to the credit of your Bessy could it be supposed that the attention of a gay man of the world gave her pleasure. But God can bring good out of apparent evil. I am never an hour in such company without sighing for the society of those whose conversation can administer edification and delight. Need I tell you whose is capable of doing this?"

The gentleman she refers to as a "military friend" was Captain D——, who had long paid her the most persevering attention. We believe it was on the occasion of his last visit to Skelton that he begged her to sing one of her old songs, at the close of the Sunday evening. For a long time she refused, but at length, yielding to his persuasion, she adapted the words of a hymn she had herself composed to the tune of the song he had asked for. Captain D—— was affected to tears. The hymn was expressive of the happiness to be found in religion, as compared with the fancied enjoyments of time and this world. It ran thus:—

*"As I glad bid adieu to this world's fleeting pleasures,
And seek in Religion the joys she conveys,*

If you knew how my heart finds delight in her treasures,
Would you bid me resign them ?

Ah, never! ah, no!" &c.

" Skelton, September 2d, 1801.

"How valuable is the privilege of conveying our thoughts to the absent! When I take up my pen to address my friend, surrounding objects die away, and my full heart recognises only one terrestrial good. I forget the space that intervenes, and am ready to expect an immediate answer to any questions I would make. Pleasant delusion! I do not love to part with it; and yet I scarcely dare say that I wish it a reality. At the moment I write, you are probably calling sinners to repentance. Were the phantoms of my imagination realised, numbers might lose a blessing, while I perhaps might gain one. Am I selfish enough to wish this? I hope not."

" Skelton, October 7th, 1801.

"Is it three days, or three weeks, since we last met? I am obliged to acknowledge it is but three days. Yet may not absent friends be allowed a computation peculiar to themselves, of which the dull compiler of an almanack is ignorant? But I must not speak lightly of time, when I remember it is put into our hands for improvement, and that it is bringing us nearer to eternity. Its quick lapse may be remembered with pleasure when we 'look be-

yond this vale of tears.' Sweet confidence! that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. May the friend of my heart experience every blessing which is in Him. Mrs. W—— allowed me to speak very freely to her on the subject of religion. Mr. W——, her husband, often disputed with me. Putting religion out of the question, they are very nice people; but I cannot now make her my intimate companion. May she be brought to Christ.”*

“*Skelton, November 7th, 1801.*

“LAST week I took tea with Mr. Brackenbury, and several pious ladies from York. Your Bessy was humbled when she compared the progress she had made in the Divine life with that of others, who perhaps have not had her opportunities. Father Burdsall was here on Thursday, as lively as ever, and ‘strong in the faith.’ Captain D—— tells me you were at Selby last week. May our blessed Lord abundantly prosper your ministry. I would have banished you from my thoughts on Sunday, but found it was impossible. Together may we tread the narrow road, and ever prove helps to each other! Adored be the hand which has, I trust, led us thus far in the way.”

* Many years after the date of this letter, Mrs. Newton had the satisfaction of hearing that this friend (once the *fiancée* of her brother John) had become a decided Christian *under the ministry* of a clergyman of the Church of England.

It appears that Mr. Brackenbury paid a visit to Howden soon after leaving York. Mr. Newton thus refers to it:—"My expectations were raised high, and it was a high day. I had such a manifestation of the love of God afterwards, in private prayer, as I had seldom before experienced. My heart overflowed with love and joy. O, what a delight it is to have the Gospel clearly and affectionately recommended to us!"

"Skelton, November 15th, 1801.

"I LOST the opportunity of hearing Mr. Bramwell preach on Sunday, as good Father Burdsall preached here; but on the Monday evening I had that pleasure. And truly it was a pleasure. He much exceeded the idea I had formed of him. O my friend, may you and I stimulate each other to the attainment of that good which the world cannot give us, and which the efforts of its malice cannot take from us. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' Let us soar beyond created good, and leave mortality behind."

Again, two days later, she writes: "How willingly your fly-away horse seemed to carry you away the other evening! My outward comfort I felt was absent; but I enjoyed peace in entreating the Lord to make you instrumental in building up the faith of the Gospel. Perhaps I *was* never before led to plead for

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you thus earnestly. It will be so. I feel assured it will ; and we shall ever have cause to be grateful for our knowledge of each other. The same hand that brought yours brought a letter from my uncle ; in which he says, ‘ When the religious frenzy has left both our minds, how shall I reflect,’ &c. I grant, if religion left us, bitter repentance would ensue ; but ‘ our Shepherd’s hand will surely keep us.’ It gives me pain to see the darkness of those so nearly allied to me. O that our gracious Master may suffer us to see a time when it shall be otherwise ! Mrs. B—— offered to send for me, if I would pay them a visit ; but I do not like staying in families who are not at least seeking ‘ the pearl of great price.’ You, my dear N——, sometimes are in company of this sort : how do you bear it ? I dined at Shipton the other day ; and found, as I ever do, that I was a loser. Perhaps if I could have given the conversation a profitable turn, I should have been a gainer ; but I find this difficult in worldly company.”

Mr. Newton thus replies :—

“ THANKS be unto God our Father, whose arm upholds and directs His erring creatures. My dear Bessy’s last letter was given me when in company, and I had to retire to peruse it.
 My heart seemed at once
to overleap the bounds of our separation.”

Come, my beloved, and let us sink at the feet of our Jesus in holy adoration! May I go on seeking only the honour of my blessed Master, and the good of my fellow-creatures. My dearest Bessy, let us live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. We had a glorious day on Sunday, and several friends were abundantly comforted. The congregations were larger than the chapel could contain. . . . I am quite of your opinion about worldly company. If we are not on our guard, we shall generally be losers by associating with those 'who fear not the Lord.' May you and I live every moment for God, and at last enter those regions of eternal glory, to be seated on a throne of light for ever, and to enjoy the Source of uncreated beauty, and gaze on it through endless ages. O blessed hope! Heaven is before us! We shall go up and possess the good land.

"I am, for ever,

"Your own NEWTON."

"December, 1801.

"AFTER preaching, I was sent for to visit Mrs. B——, who was expected to die in a few hours. When I entered the room, she was praising God. She made a sign to me to pray; and I had scarcely uttered a word, when the power of the Lord came down in such a manner that I knew not how to proceed. We all

seemed to weep for joy. After prayer, I said, 'My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.' She exclaimed, 'Yes; blessed be God! O Mr. Newton, help me to praise the Lord!

'Angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come.'

"Never before have I seen anyone so happy in the prospect of death. Her face seemed to beam with joy. How true is it that the faith of Christ is confirmed by the testimony of the dying saint! May we aspire after God's love, that at last this victory may be ours."

The next letter of Mr. Newton's, from which we may cite a few passages, is dated,

"Foggathorp, January 10th, 1802.

"**HERE** we have a mixture of pain and pleasure; but *there* parting and sorrow will have no existence. *There* universal good and permanent happiness will ever reign. *There* will our happiness be as enduring as the existence of Deity. May our souls be ever aspiring after this unutterable bliss! 'We are saved by hope.' When last I parted with you, I thought of that common expression, 'Our sweets must be mixed with bitters.' It is painful to be separated; but we meet at the throne of grace."

"Howden, May 1st, 1802.

"It is a matter of great consolation to me

to hear what you say respecting Miss O—— [a friend of Miss Nodes]. May He who has begun a good work carry it on to perfection. My heart rejoices at the thought of seeing her ‘alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ May you and I, dearest Bessy, ever breathe our souls in praise to Him who is our nearest Friend; and may each day bring us a succession of grace and peace to our souls! . . . I was led to inquire, after reading your last letter, ‘Whence this power of sympathy? whence this secret union?’ My heart replied, ere I was aware, ‘’Tis *Thou*, O sovereign Power, who hast drawn the endearing link; Thou whose influence moves, whose providence directs, the creatures Thou hast made.’ God is love; Christ is love; true religion is love; heaven is love. This will be our theme to all eternity. Eternity is too short to fathom heaven’s depth of love to man. ‘Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us.’ May our souls rise and take wing: I will follow after you. You will forgive me if I say, I have the ambition to attempt to overtake you. O, what heights, what depths are before us! Blessings hang around the Cross! Heaven bled that we might live. Heaven wept that we might smile. Angels admire; but what can *we* do, but love and praise? O for a humble heart! O for a higher song!”

“ Howden, June 2d, 1802.

“ How strange that we should cleave to the dust, fond of these earthly toys, when Divine happiness is held out to our view ! Why, my cold heart, art thou not lost in wonder, love, and praise ? Angel minds are astonished at such coldness. I have lately had some gracious seasons indeed. How delightful to speak when the heart feels ! Last Lord’s-day, when I was preaching from Hab. iii. 2, the power of God came down amongst us, and many were affected. The same day, when I was speaking from 2 Samuel xii. 7, an old hardened sinner was wounded to the heart, and left the chapel to give vent to his grief. Thou, Lord, art worthy of all the glory.”

“ June 15th, 1802.

“ THROUGH the tender mercy of our God, I am just arrived at Howden, after riding twelve miles in the storm. After we last parted, I stood behind a hedge, that I might see the object of . . . Well, the path of duty is the path of safety. Good is the will of the Lord. Let us get up on our spiritual Pisgah, and take a view of the land that lies in prospect.”

Miss Nodes’s next letter, from which we shall quote, appears to refer to her contemplated marriage :—

“Skelton, August 30th, 1802.

“I THANK you for telling me to sing my ‘unbelieving fears’ away. But you did not say how I was to obtain the happy trust of which you speak. After a severe trial last week, from the opposition of some relatives I will not now mention, I felt disposed to try to sing that hymn; but when I came to the second part of the second verse, and remembered our first meeting *that* night, my voice failed me. What do you think of the manner of our departure? I shall be satisfied. Will a chaise be more convenient to you than what we first proposed? I will do as you bid me with regard to Mr. Grayson.”

A few days before her marriage, she wrote some lines, which conclude as follows:—

“Together may we live, together die,
Together claim our home beyond the sky;
Together through the fields Elysian rove,
And sing united our Redeemer’s love;
Together prostrate fall before the throne,
And hail the mystery of the Great Three-One;
In strains celestial praise, with one accord,
Jehovah and the Lamb, our common Lord.”

Life had now fresh ties, awakening new feelings in her mind. Yet in her diary, after a severe illness, she asks, “And must I quit this world, part with the body, closely as it is linked with the immortal soul, and leave the dear *ties of earth*? Nature, half shuddering,

recoils at the thought. But love, upborne by faith, cheers the sinking spirit, and points to Him who once passed for us through death's dark vale. Behold, then, my trembling soul, Him who hallowed the cold grave, and made it a welcome passport to Himself. Canst thou fear to tread the path thy Beloved has trod before thee? Banish the needless fears. He has promised His help and comfort. Glory to Thee, Thou Lamb of God, Thou spotless Sacrifice! May Thy love fill my heart with holy joy, fervent zeal, and ardent gratitude. Glory to Thee, O merciful Father, whom I claim as *my* Father, since I am Thy child in Jesus Christ. What am I, that I should be permitted to call the Maker of heaven and earth, whose presence fills infinitude, *my* Father? O, what comfort flows from the thought that God is my Father; mine, even mine! I am vile, weak, unworthy; prone to wander. Yet God is mine; nor can the united powers of earth and hell deprive me of this glorious inheritance, while Jesus is my refuge, and His dying love my plea, and the Spirit 'beareth witness' of the sacred union. May I bear in mind that 'whosoever loveth father or mother more than Thee is not worthy of Thee;' and may the objects of time and sense be to me as trifles,—but as a drop, in comparison of the ocean of *eternal love*. May the ties to earth keep their

proper place in my heart, and be in subjection to the love of my heavenly Lord and Master."

The day of her marriage arrived at last. It was a radiant sunny morning, after a succession of weeks of cloudy weather. Miss Nodes rose at six, and, according to her usual practice, spent some hours in devotional duties in her own apartment. Here Mr. Newton joined her, and, kneeling down together, they asked the Divine blessing upon their intended union. Few friends were invited to be present on the occasion. The gentleman who had always promised to 'give the bride away,' refused to sanction her connexion with a Methodist preacher. Poor Mrs. Nodes kept her room. She had given her consent; but could not be induced to be present, still fearing that the step would be fatal to her daughter's happiness. Mr. Johnson, an aged Methodist minister, acted as father of the bride; and in conducting family-worship, before the small company left for church, seemed to pray with prophetic assurance that the "God of the families" of the earth had ordered and sanctioned the event. At length they stood side by side at the altar; and, the brief service over, Mrs. Newton says "she felt a sense of sweet inward satisfaction that her conflicts respecting the right path were at an end. Mr. Newton was her husband;

her affection for him had become a duty; and what God had 'joined together' man could not 'put asunder.'" They spent that day in retirement, at Skelton; but on the day following Mr. Newton resumed his usual labours, and Mrs. Newton accompanied him to the house of Mr. Blanshard, of Cavil-Hall, Howden, where they remained a short time before taking possession of their humble lodgings.

She had left home with no regrets, and thinking little of Mrs. Nodes's sorrow at their separation; but when she went with Mr. Newton to the Howden chapel, and knelt in the pew in the corner, she felt haunted by some painful memories of Skelton and her mother, and, unobserved by her husband, suffered some tears to flow. But her tears were soon forgotten. Never was an union more happy than that of Robert and Elizabeth Newton—from its commencement to the day when they kept their jubilee on the 4th of September, 1852, at Southport, surrounded by children and children's children. Even some of her own relatives, who had opposed the match with the greatest bitterness, were afterwards heard to say that "Mr. and Mrs. Newton were formed for each other."

Mrs. Newton gives a somewhat amusing account of her entrance upon the duties of housekeeping: "We had nothing in the *house for dinner* when we began life together;

but I heard a boy calling ‘Herrings, fresh herrings!’ in the street, and desired the woman who waited upon us to bring some and cook them. Well, the dinner was good enough; and I remembered that I had a bottle of wine in my trunk, and sent for it. But lo! there was no wine-glass to be had. Our hostess at last produced one, the only one she possessed. I drank first, and passed the glass to my husband, who laughingly sang, ‘And when her lips the nectar touch’d,’ &c. We were very merry; but as I did not like to remain in lodgings, Mr. Newton kindly took a small furnished house, and I engaged a servant-girl to wait upon us, until Providence sent us Nanny.”

This “Nanny”—or Old Nanny, as she was afterwards called in the family—was “sent” to the young couple thus:—Mr. Newton was detained after preaching one evening longer than usual, and his bride was a little uneasy about him. In her anxiety, she tried to think that he was staying to converse with some in the congregation who, having heard the word, remained to pray and ask counsel of the minister; a very common occurrence in Mr. Newton’s early life. She joined them in spirit, and asked that God would be pleased to make her disappointment an occasion of lasting spiritual good to, at the least, *one* unawakened sinner. When her husband returned home, he told her that

several persons in the chapel had been so deeply impressed with the importance of Divine truth, that they had begged him to stay, and converse and pray with them. Amongst others he mentioned a young servant-girl, who, having been, under most painful circumstances, cast upon the world by her master, had come to the chapel in penitence and "found peace." Mrs. Newton wished to see her; and, notwithstanding the "painful circumstances" referred to, and her extremely delicate health, ventured to engage her at once. Under her kind management the girl soon grew strong, and became a most faithful and trustworthy servant. She lived to be the beloved nurse of eight children of Mrs. Newton's, and of three of her grandchildren, among whom old Nanny's skill and attention in sickness, her "Yorkshire cakes," and rare cooking, will ever be remembered. She died, while still in the family, at an advanced age, and in her master's house was mourned as a friend.

Leaving Nanny as housekeeper, Mrs. Newton now often accompanied her husband in those ministerial labours which occasioned his frequent absence from home. She had not yet learned to tolerate the loss of his society; and in her diary laments her want of self-sacrifice, feeling it hard to give him up to those services *of the church* which his increasing popularity

forced upon him. "I watched poor Mrs. Macfarlan, whose husband was a tailor, hobbling about her cottage as she chattered to him over his work, and felt as if I could envy her," she says. But never, in one instance, did she selfishly break the resolution she had made before her marriage—not to interfere with her husband's sense of duty, or to hinder him in the course the church had chosen for him. Whether she always harmonized with him on these subjects or not, she left all to the providence of God in unquestioning faith.

Mr. Newton was wishful to introduce his wife to his homely relatives at Roxby, and in the course of this year arranged to visit his father and mother. The worthy couple still resided at the bleak house on the moor, and gladly welcomed their new daughter to their hospitable home. Mrs. Newton entered at once into their simple manner of life, as if she had been brought up with them. She describes Mr. Francis Newton as a venerable saint, entering with interest into the schemes and busy talk of his large family; for on this occasion sons and daughters were gathered together to meet their sister-in-law, of whom they had heard so much. "Brother John" was milking the cow as they approached the house, his long, dark, curling hair hanging over his forehead; and, as he raised his eyes, Mrs. Newton remarked

to her husband that she had never seen so handsome a youth. Aged Mrs. Newton, a sweet, motherly person, soon came forward ; and they all repaired to the big old kitchen, with its oak-chairs and long oak-table. "Sister Anne" was busy arranging supper ; and "Sister Mary," then a young and beautiful country girl, came in with her husband. It was a simple, happy family-party. After supper, a melodious Methodist hymn was sung ; and then "the sire, with patriarchal grace," took down the "big ha'-Bible, once his father's pride," and concluded the day with prayer.

Mr. and Mrs. Francis Newton had been attached members of the Church of England, and attended the ministry of one of those clergymen of former times who preferred the sports of the field to the cure of souls. But, in the spring of the year 1785, it happened that, on their way to attend the funeral of a relative, they passed through the neighbouring village of Lyth, where Robert Newton preached his first sermon. Here Mr. Francis Newton had a sister who had been for some time a follower of John Wesley, and they called at her house to rest. On their taking leave of her, not wishing to attack their prejudices against Methodism in a more direct way, she slipped a copy of "John Nelson's Journal" into her brother's pocket as he shook *hands with her*. As she had hoped, this little

book excited his interest. He read it to his wife in winter evenings, and determined to hear the Methodists for himself. Mrs. Newton was willing to follow the light of truth, yet, afraid of being misled, it was some time before she could decide to accompany her husband to the 'preaching-house.' But both sought the Lord by prayer and reading the Scriptures. "If any man lack wisdom," said Mrs. Newton, "let him ask of God;" and once, when her husband was absent at the meeting, she spent the time in secret prayer, that she might know the right way, and walk in it. On the Easter Monday of 1786, however, a friend invited them to attend a lovefeast at Guisborough. Mr. Newton, on this occasion, was so overwhelmed with anxiety about his soul, that he rose up, and declared before the whole meeting the distress he was in. Friends came round him to encourage him. They then turned to Mrs. Newton; and were surprised to hear from her that she could rely upon her Saviour's merit and love, having already obtained the blessing her husband was seeking. Both continued from this time members of the Methodist Society, and ornaments to religion;—a religion which guided and supported them in life, and enabled them to triumph gloriously over their last enemy in a mature old age.

At this period Mr. F. Newton's family con-

sisted of six sons and two daughters ; not one of whom is now left to tell of that pleasant gathering with their brother Robert and "sister" at their father's house. Mary was married to one Billy Cobb ; and Billy was, we believe, a sailor. Anne remained with her father and mother until their death, when she was united to the captain of a small vessel. Five sons were afterwards preachers, the oldest one following the occupation of his father. Two or three simple gravestones in the churchyard at Thorpe, on the hill overlooking the sea, relate that Francis Newton, and his wife Anne Booth Newton, lived and died, as also their children ; but the church of Christ has pleasant memories connected with those gravestones, which can best be summed up in the words of the psalmist,—“ But of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her ; and the Highest Himself shall establish her.”

About Christmas of the same year Mrs. Newton paid a visit to her mother at Skelton. But home was no longer home now. She was pleased to see her mother, and her former friends ; few of whom, however, now cared to notice her. It is almost amusing to read the following letter, in which we feel how ardently she longed for the little home at Howden, made sacred to her by the affection of her “ heart's elected,” *and by the associations of married life :—*

“ Skelton-Hall, December 20th.

“ IN days that are past, Miss Nodes used to address you with delight ; but she knew not half the pleasure that she now feels in addressing her dear best friend, her dear husband. Days, hours, and minutes move heavily in your absence. How have you become entwined into my very existence, so that separation from you seems a division of myself ! But a few days more, and I trust our heavenly Father, who hath so signally befriended us, will permit us again to meet. I have not forgotten the last look my swimming eyes got of their departing treasure ; neither do I cease to remember where that dear hand pointed me to look. Ah, my love, how poor were all our enjoyments without the approbation of Heaven ! Happy as we are in each other at present, if God were not our friend, how soon would that happiness be blasted ! Or, admitting the strength of natural affection might give us a degree of temporal comfort, with what terror should we look forward to our separation at the hour of death ! But if Jesus is ours, we have more glorious prospects.

“ My dear mother is better as to her cough, but her spirits are low. To-morrow I have Miss Walteson to meet Mr. Burdsall. They told me this morning they saw you, and that you said you should be here again. How

sweet was the sound, could I have believed it ! But I knew full well they had mistaken your meaning. Were it for any other call than the salvation of souls, how unwilling should I be to be so often separated from you ! But the thought of your doing so great a work, instrumentally, makes the cross seem light, notwithstanding my tears. I shall expect to hear from you (if you can) on Friday : otherwise I perhaps shall see you the same day, Friday being the market-day on account of Christmas.

“ Mr. H. and my mother have been using their utmost influence to induce me to stay a month longer. I need not tell you I am inflexible. If the day is favourable, meet me at our little abode at three o'clock ; by which time, at the latest, I hope to be at home. O, my bounding heart—but then, my mother ! It is indeed true there is no perfect happiness below. I cannot enjoy your company without giving her pain ; but the Lord will support her. Take care of yourself. Remember the road from B— to River-Bridge. Love me, and pray for me.

“ Your affectionate ELIZA.”

“ LAST night I received my dearest Bessy's letter,” writes Mr. Newton in return. “ What did not my heart feel when I recognised the address at some distance ! I will not pretend to say how dull and heavy have been *these long days* of absence. This earth is to

me a wilderness without your presence : indeed separation would be insupportable, were it not that we know ‘the way of duty is the way of safety.’ Where He appoints we go; and having the testimony, that our ways please God, every cross is lightened, and every cup is sweetened. What has the Lord done for us ! I am humbled for my ingratitude. Come, my soul, and let us join ourselves in a perpetual covenant to the Lord, that shall not be forgotten.

“We have a lovefeast here on Christmas-day. Mr. and Mrs. Blanshard are coming. I shall be at home. What shall I add to this? If—nay, our dear mother shall have your company as long as she can. I expect to preach at Brighton on Monday; and if you inquire for Brighton when you get to Bubwith, it will be half a mile out of your way, and we shall return to Howden together. I hope Providence will favour you with a fine day for your return. God bless you, my love.

“I am, for ever,

“Your NEWTON.”

In the August of the following year, 1803, Mr. and Mrs. Newton left Howden for Glasgow, Mr. Newton having been appointed to labour in that city. After spending a short time with Mrs. Nodes, they left York by the mail, accompanied by Nanny, who wept bitterly at the idea of leaving Yorkshire and her old home.

All was strange to Mrs. Newton when they entered their new abode; and though Mr. Newton's popularity cheered her, and she was delighted to see the chapel soon filled to overflowing, she could never feel quite at home in Scotland. She had been accustomed to attend the Church of England to receive communion, and inquired of her friends at Glasgow for "the Church," as she called it. It was some time before she could make herself understood; but at length the truth dawned upon her mind that the services of the Church of England were not held in general esteem north of the Tweed. She was induced, however, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the Wesleyan chapel, administered as it then was, and still is, according to the Scotch usage. Together with her husband she frequently attended the ministry of Dr. Wardlaw, Dr. Balfour, and Dr. Ewing; and she was also introduced to the "English clergyman" and his wife, by one of her friends. Some of her most pleasing reminiscences of Scotland, however, were associated with long walks with her husband through its glorious mountain-scenery. She delighted to accompany him to Stirling on his preaching excursions, and to see the sun set from the Castle Hill, and to view the graceful windings of the Forth.

"We went to Kelvin Grove," she says, "very often; but it was not the 'Kelvin Grove'

of the old song. To enjoy Scotch scenery fully, you must make your way among the solitary glens of the Highlands, where nature seems yet to bear the impress that God gave her in the morning of creation."

At Stirling Mr. Newton had an offer of a Presbyterian church; and she felt some secret wish that he might see it his duty to accept the tempting proposal. But she never breathed one word of her feelings to him, fearing she might influence him to act against his own convictions of right. It was then that England dreaded an invasion from the French, and the name of Buonaparte had become terrible even as a nursery bugbear. Soldiers were quartered at Stirling; and on one occasion, when Mrs. Newton was sketching and her husband busied with his sermons, in the open air, they were watched, and mistaken for spies. The young minister and his wife were soon better known. The chapel became too small for the increasing congregation, and the Town-Hall was hired. This, too, was quickly filled to overflowing. Mrs. Newton's friends at Stirling persuaded her to assume the dress of the ladies around her, and to lay aside the plain bonnet she had assumed. "Why should such a bonnie lassie make herself such a fright?" said one lady. Mr. Newton seconded the proposed alteration. She accordingly

bought herself a new bonnet; but she could not help thinking that there was as much of the spirit of Puritanism in the exclusion of instrumental music from their Sabbath devotions, as in her plain attire. Once she attempted to sing a hymn on a Sunday evening, accompanying herself with her spinnet; when the good lady occupying the adjoining "flat" sent to remind her that "the Sabbath was no time for whistling and diversion."

During their residence in Scotland, Mr. and Mrs. Newton had to submit to sundry temporary inconveniences and privations. At Ayr they stayed at the lodging-house occupied by the assistant preacher, while he exchanged with Mr. Newton. After a day's journey they reached the house, which was kept by "Tebby Neale." "We ascended a wooden staircase into a dark passage," says the diary, "and were ushered into a large room containing a bed, a few plain chairs, a bit of carpet, and adorned with a greasy map of Jerusalem, pinned against the wall. My husband looked at me as he said, 'My dear, what have I brought you to!' I laughingly told him, 'we were not far from Jerusalem!' Happy in each other's society, we forgot the want of home-comforts." At Ayr Mrs. Newton visited the poor people surrounding her lodgings, and was pleased to *find so much intelligent piety among them.*

It does not appear, however, that Mrs. Newton maintained the same happy sense of the Divine presence at this time as she had enjoyed during the first years of her religious life. Probably there was a physical cause for this depression. Her health had suffered from fatigue occasioned by her long walks; and her husband, too, often complained of headache from over-exertion in mind and body. "I have lived," she says, in her diary, "since I came here, 'at a poor dying rate;' sometimes strong in faith, but again relapsing into evil reasonings with the enemy of souls. Fierce temptations often assail me, and the corruption within causes me to tremble for my eternal safety. Yet I have much to be thankful for. I have not lost my hold of my dear Redeemer; but how negligent have I been in prayer, how impatient under trials, and how often do my thoughts linger below! O for a heart burning with zeal for the glory of my Saviour! I enjoyed more comfort while hearing my dear husband speak from 'Unto you that believe, He is precious,' and appeal to our own experience to prove how precious the Lord Jesus is to us in private devotion. But my beloved husband has been twice taken ill after preaching three times, and a variety of fears occupied my mind; amongst others, the idea that the Lord would teach me that He alone

would possess my heart. I feared my Isaac was about to be sacrificed; and I had not the faith of Abraham: I could not say resignedly, 'Thy will be done.' The Lord has been better to me than my fears. O, how cold is this heart of mine to the God of so many mercies! I see religion to be 'the one thing needful' and valuable; but I want more self-denial."

Again: "My dearest husband's continued indisposition has been a great trial to me. I spent this day till evening alone with him. Bishop Beveridge's 'Serious Resolutions' fell accidentally into my hands; and I trust I profited by reading them, particularly where he speaks of resolving to set a watch over his heart. My desire is to be wholly Thine, O blessed Saviour! Do Thou confirm Thy work. On Sunday our congregations were large, and the people very attentive; yet too many seemed to hear only to criticise, and I fear little good was done."

"I heard to-day of a singular instance of God's goodness in answering prayer. A pious widow in this city was sitting in her home one Saturday evening with her little grandchild, mournfully looking at the last bit of coal as it consumed away in the empty grate. 'Granny, shall we nae hae a wee bit' fire to-morrow?' said the boy. 'Ah,' replied the good woman, 'I dinna ken when we shall have a bit' fire, or a bit' food to eat. I have spent my last

baubee this night. But the Lord will provide.' She had scarcely uttered the words when she saw the door move. She rose up quickly, opened it, and looked down the 'stair.' (Her room was an upper 'flat.') She saw no one go out; but lying on a chest by the door was a shilling. She is ignorant to this day how it came there; but received it, trusting the Lord had sent it by some kind messenger. There is much poverty in Glasgow; but God has His own way of providing for His children."—She then mentions another similar instance of providential interposition related to her when visiting the poor. "A woman who had an aged mother and four fatherless children dependent upon her was, on one occasion, reduced to great necessity. Her children distressed her with cries for their breakfast, and she saw that they were pining away for want. Recollecting the goodness of the Lord, and His promises, she was encouraged to trust that He would, in some way, speedily supply her need. Shortly afterwards, on opening accidentally an old *housewife*, she found a sixpence in it; and, small as the sum may seem, it supplied her starving family with food until she was able again to earn something for their support. She had trusted in God, and He had delivered her."

Some of Mrs. Newton's views underwent a considerable change during her residence in

Scotland, and early prejudices were removed. Her attachment to the Church of England was unabated ; but she learned to acknowledge other branches of the Church Catholic as constituting one living body. She no longer hesitated to speak of her husband as *the Reverend*, a mark of respect for his ministerial office she had hitherto withheld. She began to feel that she might hold happy fellowship with many who profess themselves Christians, albeit in minor matters they might differ from herself and the Church in which she had been baptized and brought up.

“I have been permitted,” she says, “again to sit down at the table of my Lord ; and when the sacred elements were presented to me, my heart was melted : my inward cry was, ‘O, for this love let my whole soul dissolve in tenderness!’ My husband spoke of this service as a time for renewed dedication of ourselves to Christ. My heart was at the same moment lifted to the slaughtered Lamb in vows of consecration ; yet, how weak did I feel ! This is Easter Sunday, and a dawn of gratitude seems to awaken within me ; but, alas ! it is like the sun gleaming through a cloud. The spring returns, the face of nature assumes the most engaging aspect, the natural sun enlivens and beautifies every object ; but the gaiety of the *world without* makes a sad contrast with the

gloom still resting on my mind." But the cloud soon dispersed; her soul emerged from the darkness, and she rejoiced in God her Saviour. Her husband left her about this time, to spend a few days in Edinburgh, and to attend the District-Meeting, as we find from the following letter:—

"Edinburgh, May 30th, 1804.

"How often have the last words my dearest Bess said to me when I left her sounded in my ears: 'A little letter!' I eagerly snatch a few moments to comply with her request. Through the good providence of God, I arrived here safe yesterday afternoon. Brother T—— preached this evening; and Mr. Chairman, who sat behind me, got up and published for me to-morrow night. I am chosen Secretary; so it must be Friday before I can see and clasp my dear Bess to my heart again. I had the pleasure of meeting 'in band' with Lady Maxwell last night, and we dine with her to-morrow. We breakfasted with Captain Currie. The friends here are anxious that I should stay with them over the Sabbath; but this *I cannot do*. I think I never felt it more disagreeable to be separated from you. The people are determined that I shall spend another year at Glasgow; but let them talk on. I am forced to stop, as supper waits.

“God bless my dear Bess, is the prayer of her own

“R. NEWTON.”

Mr. Newton returned home in better health, and the following Sunday he addressed two overflowing congregations without injury to himself. The summer was advancing, and, as the weather continued fine, in the course of a few weeks he preached on Glasgow-Green. Thousands were assembled, and a hallowed sense of the presence of God rested on the people. It had been proposed that he should return in the following August to England; and Mrs. Newton resolved to accompany him to the London Conference, there to await the fixing of their future destination. They embarked on board an armed smack, bound for London, in August, 1804, and were becalmed for nearly a week. To add to the disagreeables of this tedious voyage, Mrs. Newton was kept in continual alarm of the French; and as the guns were daily fired, and the captain talked largely of the necessity of a constant look-out for danger, her nervousness increased so much that Mr. Newton decided to land at Cromer, in company with two or three passengers who were reconnoitring the defences of the country for the Government. They went on by land; and upon *arriving in town*, Mr. Newton took his wife to the

house of their worthy host during the Conference. Here they were received with the greatest kindness and hospitality. In London she saw Methodism under a new aspect. As she sat in the little parlour in the house adjoining the chapel, many a sedate and earnest face passed in and out, all intent upon the great work of calling sinners to repentance, or occupied with some important debate in the Conference. Little did they heed the girlish-looking wife of Robert Newton. On one occasion she heard Mr. Benson, with another grave personage, lamenting that "*that* Newton had not stayed quietly in Scotland, instead of putting the Conference to any expense by his long journey;" and she felt roused to say "that Mr. Newton had paid his own expenses" in the said journey. Mr. Benson she describes as somewhat stern and exacting; an Elijah, earnest in the pursuit of truth and duty, rather than an alluring St. John. His sermons, she thought, were "all strength, bone, and sinew, with little of pathos." The acquaintance of Dr. Coke was formed by her during this visit, as also that of Samuel Bradburn, Dr. Adam Clarke, and others. She met Mrs. Mortimer, who had been the intimate friend of John Wesley, and was much interested in her society. The uncle who had opposed her marriage occupied a house at Brighton during that autumn; and, as he kindly invited her to

visit his family at the sea-side, she now took the opportunity of introducing him to Mr. Newton. The result of this visit was a mutual good understanding. Her uncle was much pleased, and forgot his former opposition to the connexion with a Methodist preacher. Mrs. Newton's health was re-established at the sea-side, and she parted from her relatives in the reciprocated hope of meeting each other again. When the "Stations" were read, Mrs. Newton was delighted to hear that her husband was appointed to Rotherham. She longed to return to "dear Yorkshire," and the rough provincialisms of her native county still sounded like music in her ears. Having paid a short visit to Mrs. Nodes at Skelton, they took possession of their new dwelling. A very modest one it was; and well might Nanny exclaim that it was "unfit for Missis." The stone floor to the little parlour, and the rough furniture, were certainly not inviting. But kind friends came in, and all was soon put in comfortable order. "I never met with more noble and disinterested kindness," says Mrs. Newton, "than in that humble dwelling."

The parlour was shortly so metamorphosed that her husband, on his return from a country journey, scarcely knew it. A new carpet was laid down, and new curtains had been provided; *for it appears* these worthy ladies had instituted

what in the back-woods of America is called a "*Bee*," for the especial benefit of Mrs. Newton. One had been stitching at the carpet, and another at the curtains; and Mrs. Nodes, too, had sent a bed from Skelton; and what may not nimble feminine fingers and feminine tact accomplish, in the way of giving an air of elegance and refinement to the plainest habitation? Mrs. Newton had just then in prospect an additional tie to her little home; but her hope was destined to be disappointed. An alarm, occasioned by a large dog which sprang suddenly upon her, while it endangered her own life, occasioned the death of her first babe, April, 1805. She recovered only after several weeks of confinement to the sick-room. "The Lord hath chastened me," the diary continues, after a considerable break; "but chastisement has been so mingled with mercy, that the one has scarcely been discerned for the sweetness of the other. Though I do not enjoy the presence of my babe, I resign it to Him who forbade not the approach of such to His arms, but took them up and blessed them. A few weeks ago I said I did not ask high things for my child, should it be spared; but I asked its salvation; and God hath heard my petition, and hath placed it beyond the reach of evil. What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits? I will take *the cup* of salvation, and devote myself

again to His service. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to ratify the vow I make to be wholly Thine Amen."

In little more than another year the maternal hopes were realised, and Nanny and Mrs. Newton divided the new-born care, a smiling girl, between them with almost equal delight. Gentle Miss Nightingale, then just in her teens, bought "baby" a hat and cloak. Mrs. Newton was her *confidante* in those days; and the young mother, like an experienced matron, felt ready to give her young friend good advice and salutary lessons. Much had they to tell to each other in the snug parlour, when the class-meeting was ended, and they were left alone. Then occurred a great chapel-opening: Mr. Pipe preached in the morning, Mr. Newton in the evening, and crowds assembled to hear. Those were truly happy days, and Mrs. Newton thus records her thankfulness to the Supreme Father:—

"What has the Lord done for His creature! In the hour of nature's extremity He was my helper; and lo! I am now the living mother of a perfect living child. Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. What shall I render unto the Lord? I will present my soul and body a sacrifice unto Him. O *that it may be accepted in His sight!* I am

such a weak, ungrateful creature that, unless prevented by Thy grace, I shall again forget Thy mercies : but may Thy power prevent me ; and may the dear infant be an additional tie to devote ourselves to Christ and His glory. Accept Thine own gift, gracious Saviour, in time and in eternity."

The birth of their daughter took place in the second year of Mr. and Mrs. Newton's residence at Rotherham, and shortly before the Conference which should determine their future appointment. This annual assembly was held that year, 1806, at Leeds. Mr. Newton writes a hurried note from Wakefield :—

"I HAVE only just time to say, my dear Eliza, that I have got safe to this place, after leaving my earthly *all* behind. We are going to Leeds to dine. God bless my dearest Bessy, and the dear little baby."

Mrs. Newton reminds him, in reply, that she has his little rival with her ; and that she is to make her first *début* in the town with Nanny, in her new hat and cloak. She naturally inquires where the Conference is likely to appoint them in the ensuing year, yet is apparently somewhat indifferent to places :—
"I shall be satisfied with our appointment," she says, "because I believe it will be ordered

by the Lord ; and if you are to be much at home, I shall be doubly grateful."

* * * * *

Their next sphere was fixed for the neighbouring town of Sheffield, and Mr. Newton eagerly embraces the first opportunity of telling her their destination :—

"I kneel down in a pew, in spite of all the confusion of tongues, to address a line to my dearest Bessy, which will be carried to her by Mr. Crowther. My station has been read for Sheffield, and will, I hope, remain so. I hope, too, that the appointment is of God. Mr. M'Nicoll has just whispered in my ear, 'Give Mrs. Newton my love ; and give her an additional proof of your affection by informing her that you write on your knees.' Thank God, I was never more dead to passing objects than since I came here." . . . "How shall I express my gratitude to God for His goodness to me and mine ! The gracious Lord has cared, does care, and will yet care for us. But when shall we again meet ? A few more long days, and all we wish shall be realised. In the meantime let us continue to meet each other at the throne of grace. In spite of every remonstrance, I preach in the new chapel to-morrow forenoon ; *Mr. Bunting* in the afternoon, and Mr. Benson in

the evening. I hear that some of the ‘*muckle*’ folk intend coming. May the Master give me a word in season to say to them.”

“YOUR little rival,” again writes Mrs. Newton, “had almost made me forget to write to you till too late for post ; but I cannot resist the pleasure of conversing with you for a few minutes. O my dear love, time begins to appear long since I lost you : how impatient I feel for your return ! May we meet with our hearts alive unto God, as well as to each other. I am satisfied with our appointment at Sheffield, but fear for the health of my beloved. They say you will be much at home ; and, though it will be pleasing, if it does not agree with you, it will not make me happy. I wish the friends would be persuaded to take you a house in an airy situation ; though I believe they call Carver-street such a one. We must receive it as Providential. The Lord be with us.”

Mrs. Newton took leave of her friends at Rotherham with regret, her husband’s ministry there having been attended with great success. A new chapel had been erected, and a commodious minister’s house had taken the place of their former dwelling. The congregations had also increased, and the church had lengthened her “cords” and strengthened

her "stakes." She was sanguine, however, in the hope that Mr. Newton would be increasingly useful in his new scene of toil; a hope that was not disappointed.

At Sheffield she renewed her acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Bunting, who entered upon this sphere of labour in the second year of Mr. Newton's appointment there. It was an acquaintance that soon ripened into friendship, and that continued unbroken during the long period in which these two servants of Christ were suffered to be fellow-labourers in the same vineyard,—despite the frequent occasions of collision and strife which occurred in the wear and tear of fifty years.

"I first saw Mrs. Bunting in London," says Mrs. Newton, "when she was trying to reconcile another minister's wife to an appointment in an obscure field of labour. When I saw her the second time, she was in the little parlour of the preacher's house at Sheffield, mending her husband's stockings. Mrs. Bunting said, 'I mean to be very thick;'* and very 'thick,' sure enough, we were." They arranged to spend the evenings in each other's society, when not otherwise engaged. Their husbands were frequently absent, preaching in the surrounding villages; and the two ladies,

* A provincial term for "friendly."

the one with her infant son, and the other with her infant daughter, brought their work-baskets, and passed the evenings in pleasant chat.

At Sheffield these two eminent men brought all their strength to bear upon the evergrowing masses of a manufacturing population, among whom a low scepticism, the vulgar infidelity of Paine, associated with the "Red Republicanism" of that day, was fast gaining ground. Mr. Newton was eminently successful in combating this form of error. We must not say that he was a mob-orator; but he could address the working classes with wonderful tact. Himself a Yorkshireman, he knew how to frame the broad Saxon into sentences that they could understand, and to bring home to them the truths of the Gospel. It was here that he happened to visit a poor mechanic, who had been long led astray by the influence of Paine's disciples at their meetings for disputation and drinking. This man had heard Mr. Newton preach at one of the large chapels; and although he could not reply to the objections of the sophist and the caviller, which he had learned to entertain, the word had fastened itself on the heart, and he returned home to pray to Jesus of Nazareth, whom he had before blasphemed. The minister had urged his congregation to "*prove* the power of the Gospel by prayer for

the Holy Spirit;" and this wanderer resolved to try the experiment. He prayed, and mourned for sin, until it pleased God to reveal Christ to his soul as "the way, the truth, and the life." His scoffing companions came about him with their questions and their sneers. "Ah," he said, "I have found an argument for the truth of the Gospel that you know nothing of. I know that Christ is the Saviour of sinners, because He has *saved me*." His infidel associates were silenced, and left him.

Mr. Bunting, in his efforts to promote the observance of the Sabbath, used his influence to stop the practice of teaching writing in the Sunday-schools with great success. "I owe it to him," says Mrs. Newton, "that I abandoned the habit of walking out on the Sunday afternoon with my child, as being liable to be misunderstood by the working people with whom we were surrounded." Mr. Bunting's advice was also followed upon another subject. Mrs. Newton, as we know, had been in the practice of reading and praying with the people in little companies. She did not intend to preach or teach; but, as the societies became larger, these meetings for reading seemed to be leading to something very like it. On one occasion, a neighbouring village *having been* disappointed in the wish to obtain

Mr. Newton's services, a worthy man stepped forward and said, "If ye can't come, can ye send 't Missis?" Mr. Bunting, however, advised her to restrict her religious zeal within the limits of her own family, or the class-meeting. "Her husband," he said, "was the minister; the minister's wife should act only in the retirement of social life." All that he said was in harmony with Mrs. Newton's own feelings, and from this time her character became singularly unostentatious and retiring. She visited the sick, spoke amongst her female friends at the class-meeting, but never attempted to convene a public meeting or assume the office of teacher.

"I still retain the pleasant recollection of our early friendship," we find in the journal. "When Nanny went out with my child, Mrs. Bunting's boy was taken with her, and for some time our children were allowed no other play-mates. Mr. Barber had given me the charge of a class; but I now feel that I was too young to counsel old and experienced Christians. It would have been better if I had confined myself altogether to district-visiting, and the duties of home."

And there was enough to do amongst the poor. The people of Sheffield were, at that day, very ignorant and depraved: "But

not so bad," she says, "as good Mr. —, one of the young preachers, supposed. Happening to meet a boy with two large cans slung across the back of an ass, he asked him what he had got there; for he had observed him and others bringing these huge cans into the town every morning. The lad was, no doubt, a Yorkshire *wag*; for he touched his hat with a smile, and said, '*Gin, sir.*' The minister was horrified; and on the following Sunday he declaimed largely against the sins of Sheffield, where gin was consumed to so disgusting an extent, that 'big cans of it were brought in every morning on asses.'"

Mrs. Newton's diary at this time evidences that the work of Divine grace in her soul was still advancing under the teaching of God, and the happy influence of her religious friends.

"I was this morning permitted," she writes, "to approach the Lord's table. I went to His house deeply humbled under a sense of my own unworthiness; but O, how are His ways unlike our ways, and His mercies past finding out! The sweet sense of my Redeemer's presence in the holy ordinance dissipated every gloomy fear, and my heart overflowed with joy and gratitude. The past was recalled to *my view*,—God's goodness in calling me out of

the world, in accepting me for His child ; and the blessed occasions when He appeared to me as ‘the chiefest among ten thousand,’ the ‘altogether lovely ;’ while my whole soul seemed lost in ecstasy in the bright prospects that converting grace had opened before me. Again I devoted myself to the Lord’s service,—that service which I have found so delightful ; and ‘tears of joy my eyes o’erflowed.’ ”

The following extract is dated January 7th, after the Covenant service :—

“The year is past. Another is commenced. Remember not against me, O God, the errors of the year ; but let the blood of the covenant be applied anew to my conscience. Again I offer myself to Thee on the bended knees of my heart. Myself, my husband, and the infant Thou hast given us, I would consecrate to Thee. I have been permitted to renew my covenant again in public, and would beseech Thee, my Divine Master, to send me aid from above, that broken vows and unfulfilled resolutions may never rise up against me. I have lately been determined to act by *rule*, and have seen the necessity of punctuality in my private devotions. I make my morning devotions the time of prayer for present mercies, and thanksgiving for mercies past. At noon I read a chapter, or part of one, with solemn dedication of myself to God, and prayer that I may be

enabled to fulfil my duties, as a follower of Christ, and as a wife, a mother, a mistress, and a professor of religion. At seven in the evening I go with my dear husband in spirit, and pray for a blessing on his ministry; for my country, my king, my relatives, my servants, and for the progress of the Gospel of Christ. My evening devotions are a short surrender of myself into my Redeemer's hands, with trust and thanksgiving. But I have cause to mourn for frequent wanderings of attention in these devotions, and to say that my *best* performances need the blood of Christ. What worldly thoughts creep in, when I perceive it not! How many omissions cause me to bewail my unfaithfulness! Yet the inward cry of my heart is, 'Lord, let me be Thine.' I commend myself to Thee, and to Thy gracious keeping."

* * * *

"Another month is gone. Swiftly glides the stream of time, and eternity rapidly approaches. I feel the need of grace, that I may be ready. Ah, where is the zeal, the life of the early period of my espousals, when my feet seemed to fly to meet the Lord in His house or in retirement? Yet Thou art mine; nor can the world's united power give me comfort without Thy presence. I claim Thee, in the *name of Christ*, as my soul's portion. Father,

accept Thy child through the Son of Thy love. O blessed Spirit, descend, and witness to my heart that I am born of God; so shall I cry from the depths of my soul, ‘Abba, Father.’”

“Why shrinks my soul, and fondly clings to life? O my Divine Redeemer, I pray for life, though I feel that to be ‘absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.’ Strange inconsistency! How can I reconcile such feelings with my love to Thee? O my cold heart, how base art thou, if Jesus is not the supreme object of thy affections! If I have precious earthly blessings, He has bestowed the gifts, and all are connected with that one gracious gift, the gift of Himself to this poor wavering heart. Accept, Lord, my weak trembling devotion:

‘Ye dearest ties of flesh and blood,
Loose this fond heart, and give me whole to God.’”

At the Conference of 1808 Mr. Newton was appointed to Huddersfield. Mrs. Newton having accompanied him on a visit to Derby before they took possession of their new home, afterwards met Nanny and her infant in Huddersfield, to prepare the house for her husband’s arrival. There was no need for any additional preparation, however; thanks to the care of a thoughtful steward. Everything had been *already* arranged. The tray was on the

table for supper, with a cold fowl, and some Yorkshire ham, and a small decanter of sherry. There was an air of pleasant, homelike comfort about the whole dwelling; while without there were the picturesque woods, sloping broadly down the surrounding hills, now dressed in their sober autumn tints, little hills covered with pasture, and here and there the tall chimney, with patches of cloth spread out to bleach, as if on the green of a washerwoman. There was a small garden in front of the house: and here Mrs. Newton was afterwards accustomed to sit with her work-basket, and her pencil and paper. We select the following lines from many of her pieces of about this date:—

“How sweet the feelings of a mother’s breast,
Which throbs with rapture o’er her babe at rest,
And traces in her darling infant’s face
The father’s features in each dawning grace!
Illusive Fancy bids the future rise
In brightest forms before her glistening eyes;
She thinks she hears the lisping prattler’s tale,
And feels its stam’ring eloquence prevail,
Casts days and weeks and months behind,
Sees reason dawning o’er the opening mind,—
Sees infant sports and youthful follies end,
And in the child anticipates the friend.”

Her diary at this period breathes the spirit of the serene peace that was in her heart. We select the following passages:—

“*I long for an assimilation to Thy lovely*

likeness. Give me, Lord, Thy charity divine ; Thy lowliness. Bestow these heavenly gifts on me. Thy Spirit breathes the desire. Confirm my soul, and grant me in Thy love all, all I want. One year of my beloved husband's labours in this place is nearly gone. How many have been my mercies since I came to Huddersfield ! yet how many my errors ! What new evils have I learned of my own weak heart !"

"My dear partner's support amidst so much work, my beloved child's continued health, my own sweet prospects and maternal hopes, are indeed calls for daily gratitude. O my heart, rise from these earthly objects to the great Author of all thy benefits ; let the Creator engross thy supreme affection. Religion ! pure, holy enjoyment, may it be ever mine : then life is sweet ; and when death comes, my rest shall be glorious. Look down, blessed Saviour, and deliver me from a love that borders on idolatry. Blessed, this day and for ever, be the God of all my mercies ! I bless the day that led me to Thy cross. I bless the day that I became the wife of a servant of Thine."

At Huddersfield Mrs. Newton met with many kind friends, whose cultivated tastes, and true religious feeling, harmonized with her own. Her husband's ministry was crowned

with the Master's approval, her heart was blessed with lovely household treasures, and the two years glided sweetly on. Much regret was felt when the looked-for Conference came, and she and Mr. Newton were compelled to quit the happy circle they had formed. They were stationed in 1810 at Holmfirth, within a pleasant drive of their Huddersfield friends. During her husband's absence at Conference, Mrs. Newton ran down to see her old companion, Mrs. Jones, of Sheffield, formerly Miss Nightingale. During her visit at the house of Mrs. Jones, Mr. Newton writes to tell her that "they are removing their furniture; and that he feels solitary in breakfasting for the last time in their lonely house." But he "hopes they shall be happy among the hills."

"Our cottage-home, at Holmfirth," says Mrs. Newton, "stood behind a rising slope of meadow-land, and within a very short walk of Bing's-Wood, at that time a noble wood on the verge of a rocky hill. I was delighted with the picturesque country, and spent many happy mornings helping my little girls to gather nuts and blackberries with Nanny. The short distance between the two towns enabled us to maintain our intercourse with our friends at Huddersfield; and if we found our new Circuit a little rough, we were none the less happy. I *was sometimes* asked how I could like such a

place. But a rough exterior covered much kindness : every cottage seemed to welcome me."

Mrs. Newton was once startled by Nanny's coming in with her mysterious look : " Missis, there's a man at the door who wants our master ; and he's ' agate ' saying, ' Where's Robert ? ' " The stranger was asked to walk into the parlour, where the discovery was soon made of the high respect with which " Robert," or " our Robert," was regarded by the people of the hills. The visitor wanted " Robert " to preach at " their chapel," and would take no denial till Mrs. Newton had promised to use her influence in the right direction.

Those were the days of " General Ludd." The tragical death of Mr. Horsfall took place during Mr. Newton's residence at Holmfirth. As a Christian minister, and as a loyal and firm " Conservative," he did the utmost in his power to assist the magistrates in the exercise of their duty. Fire-arms were supposed to be concealed in the vestry of the chapel, or about the roof. The chapel-keeper was questioned ; but nothing was elicited from him to criminate him, beyond the fact that, from fear or some other motive, he would not divulge the Luddites' secrets. Mr. Newton caused him to be dismissed from his situation ; and after this circumstance Nanny, and Naomi, an assistant-servant who lived in the family until her marriage, were

told in confidence that master was "a marked man." The good girls wisely kept their fears from their mistress; and their master was acquainted with the danger of his position. Robert Newton was, however, no coward. On the following Sunday morning, little B—— came running to her mamma, crying out that "papa was riding in Bing's-Wood with the soldiers in their red coats." He had been called up early to administer the sacrament to a dying person, and had happened to meet some soldiers, whose commander asked him to assist them in the discovery of fire-arms said to be concealed in the wood. We believe it was on the following morning that there was a little stir opposite the house, and Nanny, coming in and out to her mistress, looked more mysterious than ever. Mrs. Newton insisted upon knowing what was the matter; and it turned out that a loaded pistol, folded up in a child's waistcoat, was found hidden just opposite the door. Mrs. Newton felt glad after that to see the "red coats," as her children called them, and to hear the clatter of their horses' hoofs about the hills. But Providence preserved her husband; and the leading magistrate wrote to him afterwards to thank him for his firmness and assistance.

A party of these mistaken men on one occasion entered a house, it was told Mrs. Newton

by an eye-witness, and asked for food. They had already demolished the machinery in the adjoining mill; but there was no resistance offered. Bread and bacon were set before them; and the good woman of the house, who had been reading her Bible, resumed her seat, and again quietly turned over the leaves of the sacred book. One of the intruders walked up to the clock, and said, "General Ludd doesn't like clocks!" at the same time smashing it with a hammer: he then leaned over the worthy lady, pointing out to her certain passages of Scripture which were, in his opinion, favourable to democracy.

A single extract from the diary will suffice to show that the life of the soul was at this time maintained:—

"Once more have I vowed before Thy congregation to be Thy child, and dared to acknowledge in public the sacred covenant in which I have engaged. O Thou Infinite Goodness! with trembling I approach Thee. Wilt Thou admit me for Thine own, and wilt Thou call me Thine? my God, my covenant-help in every time of need? Then what have I to fear while Omnipotence is my defence, and the same power that called all nature into existence stands engaged, by the most solemn assurances, to succour my weakness and enable me to triumph over the temptations of the

adversary? O Thou Friend of my soul, I take Thee for my portion! I ask not the fulfilment of my own wishes, but that my will may be lost in Thine, and that in all my actions Thy glory may be my aim. I look again

‘To that bright shore,

Where sin and sorrow tear the soul no more.’

Surrounded as I am with every earthly comfort, I feel that this is not my rest: I seek one above. O, may I ensure the possession of this, whatever I enjoy, or whatever I am called to suffer! Christ is my Rock—my all; and here my tossed soul lies at anchor; here is my rest, the foundation of my hope. After Him my soul aspires. Grant me, in Thy love, all, all I want.”

“Last Wednesday was the period looked forward to with so much delight, when the new chapel was opened. The love and pleasure I felt in the society of my old and new friends, and the pleasing circumstances under which we met, seemed to give us a foretaste of the joy of angels. The morning was fine. Our friends seemed gratified. Mr. Bunting delivered his message in his usual masterly, impressive, and persuasive manner.”

The birth of Mr. Newton's eldest son took place at Holmfirth, and he was dedicated to God in baptism by their friend Mr.

Bunting. Mrs. Newton thus refers to this event in her diary:—

“How have my fears been disappointed, and my most sanguine hopes realised, in the safe arrival of a lovely boy! My life is spared, and my strength is restored. Encouraged by past mercies, and in the delightful sense of sin forgiven, I commit my all to Thy keeping. I cast myself on the boundless mercy of God in Christ Jesus. Let not the dear gifts Thy goodness has bestowed tie my soul to this perishing world; for how difficult do I find it to say, ‘I could leave them in Thine hands, and come to Thee:’

‘Unfetter’d by all loves below,
To Thee with joyful rapture go!’”

A few months later she writes:—

“The time draws near when we must exchange the prospect of romantic hills and wild rocks, for the gay scenes of the metropolis. O God, many have been Thy mercies to us since we came here. My soul adores Thee for them. Choose Thou our future inheritance for us. May our appointment be of Thee. May my husband’s ministry be owned of Thee; and may I be such as Thy word approves:

‘By Thee directed in the way we tread,
By Heaven supported and by Heaven led,
We onward press,—our soul the world defies,—
Through Thee omnipotent to gain the prize,
And mount at length triumphant to the skies!’”

After spending a day or two with her friend Mrs. Jones at Sheffield, and paying a brief visit to Mr. Turner at Derby, Mr. and Mrs. Newton arrived at their London home. Dr. Adam Clarke was the first to welcome them. He found the children alone in the parlour, and told them to run and fetch their father to see their "uncle Adam." "I am your father's brother," he went on to explain; "so I am your uncle." The cheerful message was eagerly conveyed by the eldest little girl, who wanted to know more about this new relative.

Mr. Newton had a superior house in London, and there was every inducement to make a residence there desirable; but his wife loved the country, and, like her two faithful servants, she longed to hear the dear Yorkshire brogue again. Then the children echoed her feelings, as children always do: they wanted "to go home, and gather flowers and blackberries on the hills." Mrs. Newton's health suffered from confinement in the town, and the tone of her mind appears to have been sad and depressed.

"Most of my time here," she says, "is spent in much weakness of body and depression of soul. I still hold my confidence in God, but I hold it with a trembling hand. Often have I shrunk from bodily indisposition, and wished *the cup might* pass from me. Sometimes the

cry of my soul is, ‘Let the end of this dispensation be answered in my growth in grace, and I will not ask its removal.’ My life is in His hands; but I cannot overcome the languor of spirit that I feel. I view the most interesting objects with indifference. I hear of the joys of heaven or the terrors of hell with insensibility. ‘Quicken Thou me, according to Thy word;’ and if anything hinders the growth of Thy grace in my heart, cost what it may, O Lord, remove it. I desire to make the sacrifice in Thy strength. Let me live or die in Thy service, O Thou everlasting Good. Small is my progress in the Divine life; but blessed be the hand of supporting grace which has kept me Zion-ward.”

During her residence in London, she renewed her intimacy with her early friend, her cousin. The companion of her childhood now resided at a delightful retreat at Fulham, where her amiable character had endeared her to all her acquaintance, and led the pious Bishop Porteus occasionally to seek her society. She also frequently visited her uncle, who was now an invalid, and who had pleasure in conversing with her husband. This gentleman had paid her a short visit at Huddersfield; when he was so much pleased with what he saw of Mr. Newton’s public ministry, that he offered to build him a church at his own expense, either

in town or elsewhere, if he would accept episcopal ordination. This proposal was at once declined. Mr. Newton was resolved "to live and die a plain Methodist preacher." Their intercourse was not, however, interrupted. Mrs. Nodes also spent some time with her daughter in the metropolis.

Had Mrs. Newton's health been better, she might have entered with interest into those stirring events which awakened the attention of all England in 1814; but her weakness forbade her to leave the sofa, when others were crowding to see the gathering of the four crowned heads. Nanny talked of these wonders to her dying day: "I saw the Empora of Rush-a, and the King of Prush-a, and the King of France, and the Empora of Austrie;" always concluding her story with, "And the Empora of Rush-a was a pleasant-looking gentleman, just like our Mr. Bunting." Mrs. Newton was more interested in the employment of Dr. Coke and her husband, who were then, under Providence, laying the foundation of that great work which is now sustained and directed by the Wesleyan Missionary Society.

At the Conference of 1814 Mr. Newton resolved to leave London, on account of his wife's failing health. Mr. Mortimer, the Circuit-steward, *called upon* Mrs. Newton to remonstrate with

her, and to induce her to influence her husband to remain where his ministry was so eminently useful. "He said strong things to me," she says in her diary; "but I told him plainly that my life was nothing. Mr. Newton could get another wife; but perhaps he might not get a mother for my children."

But Mr. Newton was equally firm; and good Mr. Barber, who had known Mrs. Newton in Sheffield, urged him to remove her to the country as soon as possible. Her diary at this period displays her anxiety to do right, but also a natural wish still to live, and "lean on earth's frail love:"—

"O my heart, when wilt thou be established? When shall I be able to say, 'None of these things move me?' How the creature attracts my affections to this world, and my dearest gifts are in danger of weighing me down! May my soul be unfettered by any tie, and walk in liberty. I feel Thy wisdom cannot err, and without reserve I offer myself to Thy guidance. Choose my inheritance, and direct my way."

The accompanying lines are added, and breathe the same spirit:—

"So the poor wretch that treads the slanting steep,
Wild rocks above, beneath the foaming deep,
Steps trembling o'er the dubious slippery way,
Afraid to go, yet ah, afraid to stay,—

Rejoicing grasps the offer'd hand to guide,
And safely gains again the mountain-side.
Thus, through a slippery path and dangerous road,
I'd grasp the arm omnipotent of God ;
Supported walk, though foaming billows roll,
And threatening break before my trembling soul ;
Onward I press, in weakness stronger grown,
And make through faith Almighty Strength my own."

Mr. Newton's friends in Yorkshire embraced the opportunity of soliciting his services, and he was stationed accordingly, at the ensuing Conference, at Wakefield ; and right thankfully did Mrs. Newton and the children, with Nanny and Naomi, pass again in a post-chaise over the dear Sheffield moors, where the blackberries and whinberries hung in the autumn sun, and the sportsman was heard in pursuit of the startled grouse. The family rested at the house of Mr. Turner, of Derby ; as also with Mr. and Mrs. Jones, at Sheffield. At the former place they met Michael Sadler, then, we believe, M.P. for Leeds ; and a most agreeable evening was spent with him, Mr. Newton having joined his family at the hospitable home of Mr. Turner. The preacher's house at West-Parade, Wakefield, will be remembered by many who have no recollection of the happy day when Mr. and Mrs. Newton were so kindly met there by Mr. Spicer the steward, Mr. Walton, and *others, now, we trust, united with them in a happier mansion.* "I give you joy, my dear,"

said Mr. Newton, as soon as they were alone; but she could not answer him for tears of gratitude. This was the commencement of three of the happiest years of their united lives.

“What shall I render unto the Lord?” says Mrs. Newton, as we again refer to her diary. “Blessed be the name of the Lord for His continued mercies. I have nothing to wish for! Thy bounty leaves me without a want, but for more grace; without a wish, but to make Thee a return for all Thy benefits. Goodness follows me every moment. O, may I dwell in the house of the Lord for ever! I have prospects beyond my most sanguine hopes. My health is restored. I am situated just where I wished to be. My beloved husband has the prospect of usefulness. May the anxious desire I feel for the people here be realised. My soul sinks at the feet of my adorable Master, overwhelmed with His great goodness, and can only say, ‘Hast Thou a work for me to do in Thy vineyard? Here I am, send me: I am willing to follow Thee. I acknowledge my unworthiness; but I ask Thy gracious help.’”

At Wakefield Mrs. Newton formed the acquaintance of the Rev. Richard Watson. She was engaged in instructing her children when she first saw him; and, beginning with

“the alphabet,” which was scattered about the table, he entered into a long and pleasing conversation with her on the advantages of home-education. They often met afterwards at the house of Mr. Walton. Mr. and Mrs. Bunting were stationed at Leeds about this time; and Mrs. Bunting kindly invited her old friend to accompany her husband, who was engaged to attend one of the first Wesleyan Missionary Meetings there.

“I found Mrs. Bunting at the preacher’s house in Albion-street,” she says, “dressing her baby; and after a few hours’ pleasant chat, we went to the big chapel, which was filled to overflowing. Mr. Watson, Mr. Bunting, my husband, and others spoke; among whom I well remember Winter Hamilton, then a young man just entering upon public life.”

Mr. Newton’s sisters Mary and Ann visited him in this year, shortly before they lost their venerable father, who died in the faith and triumph of the Gospel. His death was the only shadow of mourning that passed over the happy family during their residence at West-Parade.

“Our time has passed in peace and comfort at this place, and my heart feels grateful at the recollection,” continues Mrs. Newton. “Sweet were the tears of joy and thankfulness that fell from my eyes when I entered the dwelling allotted to us, and saw around me all that my

fancy delighted in. I cast myself on my knees before God, and said, 'What shall I render unto the Lord?' I have been in many instances unfaithful to such goodness, and yet mercy and goodness have still followed me. The delight that I felt on my first entrance on this Circuit was but a foretaste of the joy and comfort I have since experienced. I cannot expect such temporal comfort elsewhere; but I think, if my heart does not deceive me, I am willing to forego some of those comforts at the call of my Divine Master, to promote His cause on the earth. Let Thy voice, O Lord, call, and I feel willing to obey. Let Thy presence only cheer us. Confirm the confidence I feel that not 'a sparrow falls to the ground' without my Heavenly Father, and that Thy children are in Thy sight of infinitely more value;—all their steps shall be ordered of Thee;—yea, Thou Thyself wilt choose their inheritance."

Mrs. Newton left the following lines, written in pencil, in the summer-house where she was accustomed to sit with her children at their lessons :—

" Yes, should Thy blest voice repeat,
' Pilgrim, urge thy lagging feet,
Emblem this of life's short race,
Here thou hast no resting-place !'
Unreluctant would I say,
' Be my Guide, and I'll obey !'

Yet, ye fields of verdant green,
Soon by me no longer seen,
As I turn my sorrowing eyes
Where the lovely landscape lies,
Though resign'd, I drop the tear ;
Still will memory linger here."

It would appear from some passages in letters of this date, that Mr. Newton sympathized strongly with his wife in her love for "merry Wakefield:"—

"By Mr. Griffith you have been informed that we stand on the 'Stations' for Bath, with Mr. Lessey, jun. Of course I shall demand a scrutiny in public Conference when the 'Stations' are read, although all the preachers with whom I have conversed say that we ought to go to Bath. How it will be decided I know not. I shall say and do all I dare to return to Wakefield. Dr. Clarke is here, and preached us an excellent sermon yesterday. Mr. Reece is our president, and Mr. Bunting our secretary. Mr. Bradburn is no more: he expired on Saturday morning. I have to attend a meeting of the Camden-Town Bible Association tomorrow. The meeting is to be held in the tea-gardens of the Ramsden Arms, a kind of Vauxhall."

"My dearest E—— may perhaps be surprised to hear from me here; but it probably



may be after the postman has done 'agitating his tinkler,' that I arrive at Bedford-square to-morrow. Besides, I have a few moments to spare, and I could not resist the inclination I feel to converse with you, though but through the cold medium of ink and paper. Add to this, I have an opportunity of sending this into Yorkshire by private hand. So much by way of apology for writing to my own dearest wife. But I forgot to say at the beginning, I hope this will find you and the children well, as it leaves me at present. I think my inclination to remain another year at Wakefield has increased since I left home. I do hope, if it is for the best, Providence will so appoint it."

By a new arrangement of Conference they were accordingly stationed at Wakefield for another year.

We must now follow the family to Liverpool, to which Circuit Mr. Newton was appointed by the Conference of 1817. Mrs. Newton travelled, as she usually had done, in a post-chaise, with her young family, and Nanny and Naomi her servants; Mr. Newton having left her a few days previously. She had again new friends to make; but the kind and hospitable reception she met with from the Circuit-stewards made her feel that in Wesleyan Methodism there is but one family.

She had left Wakefield with much regret ; but she was soon at home in the preacher's house in Finch-street, within a few yards of Brunswick Chapel, in which Mr. Newton opened his commission. She found friendly neighbours in the two ladies who lived beneath the same roof. Miss Birch and her sister, although not Wesleyans, were true and faithful followers of Christ. They were then engaged in the education of their niece and nephew, who were much pleased to meet with congenial playmates in the little Newtons. Mr. Thomas Ragland, the nephew, lived to realise his good aunt's wishes, becoming a distinguished clergyman, and dying an Indian missionary. At that time he was a merry boy, engaged with the childish pleasures of tops and marbles ; and not unfrequently did the mother of little Nodes Newton talk with his aunt on the responsibilities of their charge.

At this period Mr. and Mrs. Newton enjoyed the pleasure of intercourse with many ministers of other denominations ; and they renewed their intimacy with Dr. Adam Clarke, who then resided at Milbrook. Friendships were renewed, and friendships formed that never grew old. There was Mr. Thomas Kaye, the editor of the "*Liverpool Courier*," and the familiar associate of Richard Watson ; there was the hospitable *family at "the cottage,"* some of whom are

probably yet living to remember the names of Adam Clarke, and Robert Newton, and Jabez Bunting. During her residence at Liverpool two more little girls were added to Mrs. Newton's flock. Again is the fond wish breathed in her diary, that the infant now launched on life's troubled waters may pass safely to the port of everlasting rest; and again a mother's prayer is ardently offered, which has been already singularly fulfilled. Surely He who sees the end from the beginning dictated that prayer by His Holy Spirit. On both these occasions Mrs. Newton speedily recovered.

"Five weeks have elapsed," she says, "since, in the prospect of nature's sorrow, I looked to Thee for help. Scarcely was the supplication made before the Lord heard and answered. May I ever remember that 'Thou God seest me,' and act under the influence of this recollection. This morning, October 7th, I heard Dr. Clarke. I count it amongst my privileges here, that I have the opportunity of his occasional ministry. I was edified with his remarks on the subject of the observance of the Sabbath. He said, 'God is in Himself perfectly happy, who can derive no benefit from the services of His creatures. Every requirement of His must therefore be intended for their good. . . . The striking introduction to the Fourth Commandment—*Remember*—proves to us that Moses

was not enforcing a new, but an old, command. God's resting on the seventh day was designed to be to us a type of our endless rest in heaven; a type which will not pass away: one day in seven is to be hallowed on the earth until the anti-type appears in the beginning of the eternal Sabbath.' The Doctor went on to show the physical advantages derived from this day of rest. May I find the Sabbath 'a delight,' and seek to sanctify it in my own home, in the arrangement of house-duties, and in the management of my children and servants. The weight of domestic duties often oppresses me; but may I find in God my rest. I feel weak in myself, and unable to struggle with the corruption of my own erring nature. O my merciful Saviour, I give myself to Thee, with gratitude for Thy past benefits! Let me ever be Thine. Save me in life and death. In looking forward, I am led to anticipate many cares. O God, 'our help in ages past,' let Thy smile sweeten the hour of trial! How important do I feel the charge of my dear children! May I have Thy direction in the performance of my maternal duties; and may I be enabled to fulfil the engagements my soul would make with Thee."

The three years at Liverpool passed, and no shadow fell on the preacher's house in Finch-street. The children recovered from their infan-

tine troubles of whooping-cough and measles, and the little flock were all strong and healthy when the annual Conference of 1820 met, and Mr. Newton's family was again under "marching orders." The distance to their new home was not great, however. Mr. Newton was appointed to Manchester; and, after a pleasant journey, in their usual mode of conveyance, only interrupted by sickness occasioned by the children's indulging too freely in "Eccles cakes," they were put down in Grosvenor-street. They had left their friends at Liverpool; and Mrs. Newton, and her elder daughters and their governess, were all sad as they entered the preacher's house, and gazed from the upper windows into the dingy street, crossed by another, which was then, we believe, called "Down-garret." But Manchester was not a cheerless place, even at that time of day; and there were many kind and true-hearted friends waiting to welcome the preacher and his family to the town of "mobs and cotton." Soon the dark streets were brightened by an illumination from countless small windows, as the factories were lighted up, and the busy burring wheels began their music. There was the pattering of feet, some of them, then, very little feet, on their way to the mills; and the buzz and stir in the streets reminded the inmates of the preacher's house that they were

in a working world. Presently Mrs. Newton was affectionately received by Mr. and Mrs. John Marsden, the Circuit-steward and his wife : Mr. Lessey and Mr. Hawtrey joined them at the hospitable board at supper. They had much to talk of. The Chartism of that period, embodied under the form that we have seen at Holmfirth, was crushed by the law ; but there was yet in the manufacturing towns a deep under-current of dissatisfied feeling, which showed itself in resistance to the powers that be, whether the King, as supreme, or the gentle unostentatious government of the Methodist preacher and the class-leader. But the spirit of faith and prayer was strong in the heart of many a poor mechanic ; and if there was much to discourage, there was also much to awaken interest in the mind of the Christian minister. Mr. and Mrs. Newton were soon at home in their sphere of labour. His ministry was efficient ; and she worked quietly, with several other ladies, in attempting to give a domestic character to the young girls of the factories. The congregations in the chapel in Oldham-street were overflowing ; and when the swell of voices rose in choral harmony to the good old Methodist tunes, lovers of music have said that few oratorios could be more effective.

“I remember those old times some forty-

three years ago," says a friend of the writer, "when Robert Newton preached in the large mother-church in Oldham-street, and every nook and corner was filled with earnest waiting listeners. They had no organ then; but the singing-gallery was crowded with singers; and the full choir of voices was as good as one of Handel's choruses, when all rose up to sing the 'Old Hundredth' to those words in Wesley's Hymn-Book, 'Before Jehovah's awful throne.' The attention during the sermon was so great, one might hear a pin drop. A thousand eager faces hung upon the lips of the preacher; and at prayer there was a rolling murmur of 'Amen' that breathed the spirit of primitive Christianity."

And this was not mere outward effect: true religion, under the simple form of Wesleyan Methodism, had taken deep root in the hearts of the Manchester people; may we not say, in the heart of Manchester herself? The pulse of life in that growing population, mighty for good or evil, was in no slight degree affected by the denominational peculiarities of Methodism; and we think that few impartial observers of the history of that interesting city, for the last half century, will deny, that she owes much of the excellence found in the character of the working masses to the teaching of the followers of John Wesley.

Mr. and Mrs. Newton had no occasion to regret their residence in the preacher's house in Grosvenor-street. The retired parlour overlooking the dingy street was bright with happy faces, and was never sobered by sickness or death during the three years they spent beneath that roof. In the summer of 1822 Mrs. Newton rejoined some of her Liverpool friends at the sea-side; and Mr. Newton, as it appears from passages in the following letters, paid his first visit to Dublin, lingering for a few days at Waterloo.

“WHAT,” he says, “will my dearest Eliza think on the reception of this? This is Wednesday evening, and I am at Mr. C——’s cottage, at Waterloo, instead of being in sight of Dublin. It is time I began to explain. We arrived safe at Liverpool at half-past two o’clock, and dined at the ‘Angel.’ On inquiring about the steam-boat, we learned, to our no small mortification, that no vessel would sail from Liverpool for Dublin till Thursday morning. I then walked up to Mr. C——’s, and afterwards drove him and Mr. H—— to Waterloo, where we found Dr. and Mrs. Clarke, Mrs. Kaye, and Miss Clarke. The live-long day I have spent here: Miss T—— has kindly accompanied me cottage-hunting. We found one, everything you could

wish. How would my dearest E—— have enjoyed the day, had she been with us ! Often did my thoughts follow my heart to Grosvenor-street.”

The next letter is dated “Dublin :”—

“WE had a delightful passage. The day proved fine, and the company was agreeable. I was not in the least sick, and got the credit of being an excellent sailor. On our approaching the quay, my own name was the first that I heard. A gentleman then came on board who recognised me, and said, ‘You’re welcome!’ He informed me that we were expected at Mr. P——’s, York-street. On his leaving us, H—— and I got back to back in a car, and Pat set off with us. ‘And plase your honor, I forgets, now, where this York-street is,’ says the driver. Going up Parliament-street he had a mind to make a flourish ; but his horse stood stock still. On our arrival at York-street, the clock struck twelve, and the family were gone to bed. We then drove to the hotel in Sackville-street ; but they were full. We got at last comfortably accommodated at this hotel. I set off this evening at eight for Cork ; Sunday, Bandon ; Tuesday, Cork ; Wednesday, Limerick ; Thursday, Roscrea ; Friday, Mountrath ; Saturday, Dublin again, where I hope to receive a letter from my dearest E——. Ah, my dearest

life, often have we been separated by hills and dales, but never before did ocean roll between ! But no, we can never be separated. We are *one* for eternity. The Bank and public buildings are fine here; but Dublin as a whole is not to be compared with Edinbro'. . . . Give their father's love to the dear children; and as my pen cannot, let your own heart tell you with how much affection and tenderness

“ I am your own

“ R. NEWTON.”

Mrs. Newton met her husband at Liverpool in the course of a few weeks; and he joined his family at the cottage he had hunted out for them, returning with them to Grosvenor-street the following Sunday.

In the spring of the following year, Mr. Newton visited his relatives in Yorkshire.

“ I was most agreeably entertained at Mr. B——s,” he writes to Mrs. Newton, dating his letter from Newcastle; “ and I have found Miss B—— a very superior young lady. Our congregations were large. . . . I found my family all well. They had published for me to preach the Missionary sermons at the Bay without my knowledge; and the people at Whitby made me ashamed by the kindness and respect they manifested. What am I, O *Lord*, a poor worm, that Thou shouldst give

me such favour in the eyes of the people! My dear life will pray for me that I may be found faithful. As I find I cannot reach home on Friday without travelling all the preceding night, for *your* sake I will rest."

While Mr. Newton was thus engaged in his public duties, the quiet home-circle was ruffled by the event of Naomi's marriage to a pious class-leader, in well-to-do circumstances; and the little girls had no small delight in assisting their elder sisters to deck out Nanny in a lilac sarsnet dress, in which, as bride's-maid, she followed the worthy couple down to the old church.

Mrs. Newton's next removal was to Salford; and it was during her residence there that she induced Mrs. Nodes, who had suffered very serious pecuniary losses, in consequence of the failure of one of the Yorkshire Banks, to leave her home, and reside under their roof for the remainder of her days. She arrived in the winter of 1825; and scarcely two months later had the satisfaction of hearing of the safe arrival of her daughter's second and youngest son, who became the solace of her declining years.

"My heart acknowledges His blessings, and my tongue would speak His praise," writes Mrs. Newton, in her diary. "My prospects open with every promise of comfort. If I have some trifling drawbacks, what are they?"

My husband has a thorn in the flesh,"—alluding to the temporary loss of the sight of his left eye, from which he recovered in the course of another year:—"my parent has suffered the loss of this world's good; and sometimes family cares weigh down my soul to earth. But Thou, O Lord, givest me grace sufficient for the day. I give myself afresh to Thee. Accept me, through Jesus Christ my Lord; and let Thy Spirit still witness with mine that I am born of God."

About the beginning of the next year, February 14th, Mr. Newton's only surviving parent departed hence, in the hope and triumph of the Gospel; having had the opportunity, at her own request, of once more seeing her son Robert, and taking leave of him.

"I visited her," says Mr. Ratcliffe, "a few weeks before her death; when she expressed her entire confidence in the blood of Christ. 'I know,' she said, 'that my Redeemer liveth. Jesus is all in all. In looking back, I see no ground of reliance in anything I have done; but He is the foundation of my hope.'"

Thus confidently, in life's decline, at the age of eighty-three years, could she speak of her prospects beyond the grave.

Before leaving Salford, Mr. Newton bought a house at Southport; then an obscure hamlet of scattered mud cottages among sand-hills,

enlivened by a single row or street of small lodging-houses. There was no chapel at the place at that time; but the friends hired one of these uncouth cottages, at the extremity of a sandy lane, in which Divine worship was celebrated. Mrs. Nodes took up her abode at this retired watering-place, along with one or two of Mr. Newton's children; and during the summer the entire family passed some months, in this way, at the sea-side. Mr. Pipe, Mr. Newton's early associate at Rotherham, followed the example, with his family. He had now relinquished his connexion with public life, and hoped to find a suitable sphere for his declining years in this neglected corner. Mrs. Nodes "took in" preachers, whether from Ormskirk or from Liverpool, and attended Divine service herself in the house in the lane. There are few, probably, remaining who can remember the Southport of forty years ago, and can contrast the present busy, bustling watering-place, with the bleak lodging-houses among the sand-hills, and the mud-built cottage in which the Methodist preachers opened their commission.

When the Conference appointed Mr. Newton to Liverpool, Mrs. Newton, accompanied by Mrs. Nodes and the younger children, with Nanny, left Southport in the afternoon of an autumnal day, and after a drive of a few hours

were welcomed by their old friend, Mr. C——, to their new Circuit. Three joyous years were before them all. The tall house in Mill-street, at that time the preacher's temporary home, overlooked the broad, bright river; and Mrs. Newton was perhaps the happiest of the circle. Her husband's ministry was blessed by the Divine Master of assemblies; her health and his own (for he had lately suffered from a dangerous attack of bilious fever) was restored; her children were growing up around her, some of them already entering life in the blush of girlhood, some of them prattling still in the nursery, and no bitter cares or fears had hitherto disturbed the mother's heart for their future weal. But prosperity has its dangers; and as we peruse her journal we are not surprised to read,—

“I feel it needful to watch against the evils that most easily beset me. I am too often careful and troubled about many things,—too anxious about the things of this world. Innocent conversation, about the usual hour of prayer, too often proves a hindrance to me in that soul-supporting duty. Our society is courted, and it is difficult to associate with the careless and irreligious, and maintain the spiritual mind; and yet it is not easy to draw the line, and decline the intercourse of our acquaintance that know not Christ. O Lord,

guide me through the billows that make me afraid, and let me see the dear children Thou hast given me grow up in Thy faith and fear."

During her residence at Liverpool, her eldest daughter was united in marriage to a merchant of that town; and her eldest son, now in his fifteenth year, was suffered to leave school, and take his first step in life as a clerk in a merchant's office. These were two important changes; for one of the domestic circle had quitted home for the guardianship of a stranger, and another, young, unsophisticated, and inexperienced, had gone forth, to meet life's temptations, possessed of rare and perilous gifts which were too sure to attract and draw down upon him the lurid "lightning happiness" of this world's smiles.

We must not forget the opening of Stanhope-street Chapel, which took place in the spring following Mr. Newton's appointment to the Liverpool Circuit. At first the family had attended Pitt-street Chapel, which was at a considerable distance from the preacher's house; and the day when the new "Zion" was to be opened was looked forward to with eager expectation, especially as in this place of worship the Liturgy of the Church of England was to be used, a desideratum which Mrs. Newton had long felt in her devotions. The anticipated day arrived,

and the bright building of red brick, now grown so faded and dingy, was filled with happy faces, eager to hear the venerable Adam Clarke preach the first sermon in the sacred edifice. Mr. Newton read the liturgical service, and then the preacher ascended the pulpit. We can well remember him in his singular blue coat, his snow-white hair, his plain, practical sermon, and the hymn which, as the phrase is, "he gave out" two lines at a time:—

"Ye neighbours and friends, To Jesus draw near ;
His love condescends, By titles so dear," &c.

It was but a few years before the venerated Doctor finished his course ; and he preached as one who had only time to deliver briefly the Gospel message, dealing in homely, plainly-spoken truths, and commending the service of his Master to his hearers from the life-experience of threescore years and ten. The service ended, the congregation dispersed amid the interchange of much happy feeling ; and Mr. Newton might be seen at the door of his house, his infant son in scarlet petticoats at his side, inviting group after group of friends from the country to enter beneath the hospitable roof. "Come, friends, we have open house on this occasion : walk in ; Mrs. Newton is in the dinner-room." And, O ! what fragrant savour came up from the *busy kitchen*, where Nanny was still at work

with her Yorkshire currant-cakes for tea, in case any should wish to hear Richard Watson in the afternoon, and return to the preacher's house to be ready for the evening sermon. Those services were finished by Mr. Bunting, whose plain, practical sermon on the Sunday following the Wednesday may yet, haply, be remembered by the boys and girls of Jordan-street school,—now, it may be, sedate men and women; for the writer still vividly recalls the enthusiasm with which they sang the hymn,—

“I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,”—

the old, familiar Methodist tune still ringing in the ears. Ah, how many since that day have finished their course, whether of weal or woe! and not a few, we may hope, are now singing their hymns of praise in sweeter voices around the throne of God and of the Lamb. The late Rev. John Bowers was stationed at Liverpool, and the late Mrs. Bowers was a near neighbour and valued friend of Mrs. Newton and her family, in the second year of her husband's ministry there. During a long illness Mrs. Newton had frequent opportunities of visiting her friend; and we find the following lines inserted in her diary, inscribed, “On the death of Mrs. B——,” of whose peaceful

departure she had been an edified, though mourning, spectator. We select only a few lines :—

“The last sad scene, the fatal conflict’s o’er ;
The spirit’s fled—our gentle friend’s no more.
The wife and mother, with that parting sigh
Left earthly ties for stronger bonds on high.
Attendant angels bear their sister home ;
And Jesus, smiling, bids His ransom’d come.

* * * *

Won by the grace of her all-conquering Lord,
Her heart she open’d to receive His word,
And gave, in early life, the rose of youth
To bloom and flourish in the paths of truth ;
Early the consecrated way she trod,
Led by a faithful messenger of God.
And when the awful hour of suff’ring came,
And deep affliction weigh’d her sinking frame,
While busy fancy portray’d in her mind
Her babes and husband,—all to be resign’d,—
Nature recoil’d ; but grace triumphant shone,
And she could meekly say, ‘Thy will be done :’
And in the arms of her redeeming Lord,
She bless’d His name, smiled, and adored ;
Then fled the spirit from its house of clay,
To mix with heaven’s bright throng in endless day.
So sleep the righteous !—O, my Lord, may I
Live with Thy church, and learn of Thee to die.”

* * * *

To turn again to the diary, we trace the same spirit :—

“*I see human life is fleeting and empty,*

and eternity hastening ; but let me record mercy, mercy, mercy, in the midst of much weakness and unprofitableness. Our dear Christian friend is gone. Another, the fair, lovely bridesmaid of last year, moulders in the dust ; while the bride is become a mother."

Mrs. Newton was evidently associating the removal of her two friends who had died in life's spring, with the slow decline of Mrs. Nodes, of whose departure to a better world she was now in daily expectation. She lingered two more years, however, and died at the advanced age of eighty-one, happy and perfectly recollected. Mr. Newton had been absent, on the occasion of the opening of a chapel at some distance from home ; but he arrived in time to enter the dying chamber, when she motioned to him to join in prayer with her once more, and then after a few gentle sighs breathed her last. She had embraced the Gospel late in life ; but her mind was taught by the Spirit, and for some time she had been enabled to rest with simple faith upon the merits of her Lord and Saviour. She was buried in a grave near that of the late Mrs. Bowers, at her own request, in the cemetery adjoining Stanhope-street Chapel.

" Death has entered our dwelling," says Mrs. Newton ; " and I no longer have a mother.

I cannot now go in and out, and hold happy converse with her who gave me birth. Where is she? With Thee, my blessed Saviour, rejoicing in Thy presence; and I am yet in a world of probation and trial, but trusting that Thy hand will at last bring me through this scene of change and uncertainty to the haven of everlasting rest. How often do I forget to praise Thee, in whose love I have trusted! May we all bow to Thy will, and see more of the value of religion, and less of this world's fascination. O the temptations, the alluring temptations, of youth! May Thy mercy, O God, sustain me. Be Thou my helper!
. This year we must leave again our Liverpool circle. I am willing to go where God appoints; but I weep because I must leave my ——, alone and unguarded amongst strangers; no father to control,—no mother to counsel and aid,—no sisters to administer the joys of the domestic circle. Let not one of them Thou hast given me be lost.”

* * * *

During Mr. Newton's residence in Liverpool, as in other periods of his ministry, it pleased God to sanction and bless his efforts. An interesting case occurred just at this time, the particulars of which we afterwards heard from *the convert's* own lips. Mrs. B——, the

wife of the captain of a small vessel, had been deserted under very painful circumstances by her husband. Her mental agony, on hearing that the vessel had sailed one Sunday morning, and that another female had accompanied him, became so intense, that she went out towards evening, intending to drown herself in the docks as the shadows of night closed. Providentially she had occasion to pass Pitt-street Chapel before reaching the river. The gas was lighted, and the singing of the opening hymn attracted her attention. She went in; Mr. Newton was in the desk, with another minister, and she thought he turned and looked kindly at her. As she heard of the love of Christ to sinners, she took courage, and came to Mr. Newton in the vestry, at the close of the service, to ask his counsel and prayers. From that time she became a happy and consistent Christian, until her death about the year 1848. Her little savings were hoarded, and forwarded to Mrs. Newton, or her daughters, for the Wesleyan Missionary Society. If the record of those small sums still stands in the old Missionary Reports, headed "M. B.," let it not be forgotten that they were the contributions of this poor creature who was thus rescued from a miserable end. She died in the full triumph of faith, in obscure lodgings in Liverpool.

Mr. Newton had passed six years in the two Liverpool Circuits, and was again appointed to labour in Manchester. The family returned in 1832 to the home they had known twelve years previously. Changes had passed over that Manchester circle. Mrs. Newton's friend, Mrs. John Marsden, with several others, had died in the Lord; but young faces filled their pews, and nothing was omitted that could make their residence at the preacher's house pleasant. But, in the midst of much social and domestic comfort, Mr. Newton had trials in his ministry, from which his sympathizing wife also suffered in the seclusion of her own heart. It is unnecessary to refer to this subject in the way of explanation, as it has long been before the public. In this painful business, Mr. Newton, in his office as Chairman of the District, had to stand in the front of the conflict. And he stood forth boldly, and preserved the safeguards of Wesleyan Methodism. Few but those who knew and loved him best could have detected, under his apparently unruffled look and manner, the conflict within, the mental struggle, which was often expressed at home by the deep-drawn sigh, and the sad tones of dejection. Mrs. Newton knew it all, and felt it all; but throughout this period of severe trial she preserved a happy composure in the *domestic circle*, seeing to it that no evil spirit

of dissatisfaction brooded over the sacredness of the homely hearth, but that all was confidence and pleasant sunshine there. She drew her husband's attention to the happiness of their youth, and reminded him of those seals to his ministry, in the early period of his career, who had already entered into rest, and of his own quick approach to that world, where God alone is the judge, and the opinion of man is counted as nothing.

And, assuredly, God's Providence was, even then, over him as a tower of strength. On one occasion, in the absence of his family, occasioned by the illness of one of his daughters, he went as usual to preach at a chapel situated among the masses of the manufacturing population. He went sadly; for he knew that mistaken and disaffected men had no wish to see *his* face in the pulpit of that chapel. To his surprise, his opening the Hymn-Book was a signal for a storm of yells and hisses. In vain he attempted to proceed with the service; his strong voice was no match for the confused cries of the mob, who had at length become violent, and were rushing from their seats towards the pulpit. A friend who was present turned off the gas; and an old coachman, who had long known Robert Newton in his Missionary and other journeys, begged him to descend from the desk, and leave the building



in the darkness. He walked home accordingly, accompanied by his young friend and the coachman, keeping the dark side of the road, which was at that time only obscurely lighted, and they reached the preacher's house in safety. "Alas, for those poor misguided men!" said Mr. Newton, as he narrated the circumstance to his family on the following morning. "They were not *our* people, I feel assured of that, but the mistaken operatives, who had a political motive for their malice. But let us learn from all this, how one man's sin or error may grow and grow, till it becomes a mountain of terrible magnitude."

Mr. Newton was escorted by the police on the following Sunday, and driven to the chapel in the carriage of a friend. "Don't be alarmed," said a gentleman, one of Dr. Bunting's sons, to the driver: "these are two good Methodist horses!" And though coarse and scurrilous language was used as they passed, no more open violence was attempted.

In the course of the following summer, and during his absence from home in Scotland, Mr. Newton had a serious illness. Mrs. Newton and her daughters were returning from chapel at the close of the evening, when their friend Mr. Anderson put a letter into *their hands*, communicating the sad intelli-

gence that the husband and father was suffering from a severe attack of inflammation of the lungs. Though overwhelmed with grief, Mrs. Newton left home by the evening mail, to rejoin him at the house of Mrs. Drummond, in Edinburgh.

“Morning dawned,” she says, “as I passed through the beautiful mountain-scenery of Westmoreland; but I had no heart to look from the coach-window upon those fairy-like landscapes, now blushing in the opening light of the rising sun. I was already in spirit in the sick-room, fearing, yet hoping and praying, that God would be pleased to spare the life He had so often preserved, and consecrate him afresh to His sacred service.”

She reached Edinburgh at length, and was comforted as she heard the hasty words, “Mr. Newton is better.” She eagerly repaired to the house where he was staying. Miss Drummond, afterwards Mrs. John Cooper, came to meet her; and her affectionate welcome, and the kind manner in which she said, “I am so glad you are come!” again re-assured her. The inflammation had subsided; but the physical prostration was so great, that there was still cause for alarm. Miss Drummond and her mother had done all that kind and assiduous nursing could do; but Mr. Newton had often, as the Scotch saying is, “wearied” for Mrs.

Newton ; and when he saw her by his bed-side, his pulse gained so rapidly, that good Dr. Coldstream warned her to be “unco’ careful.” There was no need for caution. Mrs. Newton, assisted by her young friend, left nothing undone for the invalid that love and affection could suggest ; and in the course of a few weeks the invalid was able to write to his daughters, —“How thankful I am that your mother came ! She has nursed me as no other person could have done.”

When he was sufficiently convalescent, Mr. and Mrs. Newton returned home by sea, by way of Liverpool, where he was met on the quay by his two eldest daughters, the younger members of the family anxiously awaiting his arrival at Manchester. After spending a short time at home, Mrs. Newton accompanied her husband to Sheffield, where the annual Conference of 1835 was held. Here, as we may well imagine, they were received with genuine Yorkshire hospitality at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Jones. “It was,” says Mr. Newton, “a happy Conference.” The painful and disheartening disunion of the past year had bound the assembled ministers in closer fellowship ; and in their deliberative meetings, not less than in their pleasant social gatherings during the intervals allowed for refreshment, they were all *as* “men of one mind in a house.” Mrs.

Newton writes to her daughters, who were still anxious respecting their father's health, telling them "his cough is better," and goes on to describe the happy evening hours spent with his old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Bunting and several others, while James Montgomery sat in the easy-chair beside them, listening rather than speaking, except when roused by some subject of more than ordinary interest.

It was on the occasion of this visit to Mrs. Jones, that Mrs. Newton met for the last time her dear and valued friend Mrs. Bunting. She was with her husband, as usual; and in her own playful way she was joking her old companion about suffering Mr. Newton to attend the annual assembly, as she had so often done, alone, and was speaking of the trials and ministerial discouragements of the past year. "I tell you, my dear," she said, "that *my* husband shall never attend a Conference again without *me*." Alas, she spoke in the impulse of a loving heart; but in a few short months from that time God had called her to pass the mysterious barrier that separates earth from heaven, to await her husband's arrival there.

The Conference of 1835 appointed Mr. Newton to the Leeds East Circuit. Before he entered upon the duties of his ministry in his new sphere of labour, he visited Boulogne: and

during his absence Mrs. Newton returned to Manchester and Liverpool, to take leave of her children and little grandchildren; her eldest son and daughter residing at that time at Seaforth, opposite Liverpool.

As we find from several passages of her diary of this date, her mind still reverted to the ministerial trials of her husband:—

“The year is passing swiftly away; and in the midst of so much mercy I have had drawbacks to my comfort, only known to Thee, O my God. The sad disturbances of our church, begun the year that is gone, have not passed with the year, nor has the remembrance of them faded from my mind. My own prayer is, that every minister God has honoured by a call into this part of His vineyard may stand firm to the principles of Wesleyan Methodism, as it was first owned of Him; that every hindrance to the prosperity of our Jerusalem may be removed; and that while abiding by the principles of the fathers of the church, the spirit of the fathers may come down upon them. Amen. So be it. The cause is Thine, and will prevail. Infidelity may triumph for a time. Sin may abound, and the love of many may wax cold; but if we are found faithful, the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in our hands, even in ours. O Thou glorious Author of all *good*, what am I? what are we? or what are

any human beings in Thy sight? Yet we plead Thy promises. Be pleased to acknowledge us in Thy pity, and ‘take not our candlestick out of its place.’ I expect nothing from my tears or my prayers; but Thou hast bid me ask; and I ask great things, pleading Thy love and [the Saviour’s] merits.”

Prayers are then recorded for her husband’s success and usefulness in his new Circuit, and for her children, those whom she was leaving, and those who accompanied her and their father to Leeds. The brief verses following are also of this date:—

“O Thou to whom alone I dare
Each inward thought reveal,
Preserve me from low, doubting care;
My wounded spirit heal.

“I bless Thee for the ties that bind
Life’s sympathies below;
But in these dearest ties I find
A source whence sorrows flow.

“And I have wept, and still I weep,
For those who, if they knew,
Or heard my sighs, or felt my tears,
Would sigh and weep them too!

“Bid me from earthly thoughts arise,
And seek in Thee my rest:
Redeeming love can check my sighs;
Thy grace can make me blest.

“Show me, beyond this ocean-scene
Where mortals toil below,
One glimpse of that celestial green
Where flowers immortal grow!

“Lord, I adore Thy power to save;
Thy presence still is here;
Yet, Thou who wept o’er Lazarus’ grave,
Forgive the falling tear!”

On a bright September morning, the coach left Manchester which conveyed Mrs. Newton and her family to Leeds. They had left “old Nanny” behind them, with Mrs. Paulet, Mr. Newton’s eldest daughter, as she had now become the faithful and attached nurse of Mrs. Newton’s grandchildren at Liverpool, with whom she remained until her death. The kind and hearty welcome of the Leeds friends gave the preacher’s family no occasion to regret the services of the faithful domestic. The arrangements of the house were perhaps superior to any which Mr. and Mrs. Newton had hitherto met with; nor could any Circuit in which they had previously travelled rival Leeds in the kindness and liberality of the circle of friends which welcomed them to their new home. Mr. Newton’s health was now quite restored, and by an appointment of the last Conference his services were available for the Wesleyan Connexion at large between Sabbath and Sabbath. His popularity allowed him little

relaxation from his arduous duties; and Mrs. Newton was compelled to relinquish his society at a time when his counsel and assistance in the management of her family would have been a peculiar solace to herself. That she esteemed this deprivation no ordinary sacrifice, her diary and letters of this date bear witness. But she had resolved, in the Divine strength, when she married, never to stand in the way of her husband's duty to God and His church; and she was enabled to fulfil this solemn covenant without once faltering. It is not for us to say how the more frequent presence and influence of the father might have benefited the domestic circle,—how his authority might have guided, or his example confirmed, had he restricted his evangelical labours to his own Circuit and neighbourhood, and remained at home “to bless his household.” But, believing, as we do, that he acted under the highest convictions of duty, we dare venture to say that he did wisely and well. Opinions may differ upon this delicate point; but it is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. Let human opinion stand in abeyance when God and His church have called. Let us not be in haste to pronounce, but waive our judgment, until “that day” when the secrets of all hearts shall be unveiled, when we shall “know,” not “in part,” but perfectly.

Many who were once living in sin have embraced the faith of Christ, and lived and died to the Lord, through the labours of Robert Newton. Some of those nearest related to himself, will be seen in the sequel of this narrative have already found repose in the love of the Good Shepherd, despite the errors and wanderings of long years of darkness. And, though of *all* the tale of life is not yet told, may we not trust, that in the day of final appeal he will be able to rejoice in the eternal welfare of all his offspring?

“The past has been a year of trial,” writes Mrs. Newton. “The greatest of misfortune had threatened me in the serious illness of my husband; but, as my strength was weak, God gave me more grace, and I was able to maintain the assurance that he would be spared to me. In the hour of my extremity, the Lord seemed so near to us, I felt almost at home, so bright was my confidence, so present was the Divine Object to which I clung in the hour of my anguish. Adored for ever be that merciful God which spared me the threatened trial! I have seen friends fall around me, but my beloved husband is spared. O, let the end of our coming to Leeds be answered in the spiritual good of many! All events are at Thy disposal, and into Thy hands I desire to give *myself* and mine. Yet how slow I am in learn-

ing to give myself wholly to Thy guidance ! May I flee from all outward things, and come to Thee for rest. My cowardly heart shrinks from mental suffering ; but may I submit to Thy will. My domestic comfort is often broken through the absence of my husband ; but I would keep nothing back that Thou, Lord, requirest at my hands. Light of the world, shine on my heart, and may I rejoice in Thy strength."

Even while she wrote crowds were flocking up the hill to hear Mr. Newton preach at the large white chapel near the house. "What can it be?" asked one of her daughters, on the morning of their first Sabbath. The question was answered when the family joined the congregation. The service had just commenced, and in the opening hymn the hearty voices of the vast crowd seemed to swell above the volume of sound poured forth by the powerful organ. It was the first of a succession of happy Sabbaths in the minister's family. How often, during the six years that followed, did they join in the earnest devotion of the Leeds Methodists ! The first Missionary Meeting after their arrival was an event that could not be easily forgotten. Again the large chapel was filled to overflowing ; and some that had not been in time to obtain their accustomed seat, before the crowds of people

had pressed in, were fain to thread their way to a remote corner, at the back of the orchestra. From this eminence, the sight of the concourse collected below was magnificent. The flood of gas-light fell upon the vast assembly of bright faces, all eager to hear of the success of Christian enterprise among the heathen. James Montgomery, if we recollect rightly, was in the chair ; and on the platform there were the Rev. William Barton, and " Billy Dawson," together with the Revs. Winter Hamilton and John Ely, and several others. And there was " Mr. Newton and the collection."

Mr. Dawson soon found his way to the preacher's house. He was a plain Yorkshire farmer, and resided in a retired homestead in the village of Barwick-in-Elmet. He called on Mrs. Newton to ask her how she liked " black Leeds." " I told them," he added, " they mun' get a cage first, and then look out for t' bird ;" alluding to her pleasant commodious dwelling. Mrs. Newton naturally inquired after her old friends, especially Mr. Hemington, of Thorp-Arch, and two or three others whom she had known at the outset of her religious life. Mr. Dawson well remembered their names, he informed her, but they had been long in their graves ; and then he talked, in his plain way, of the introduction of Methodism into the villages surrounding Leeds. He was a true child of

nature. We doubt if he possessed any books but two or three volumes of sermons in the quaint kitchen at Barwick; yet few who have heard him preach will not acknowledge that he was a man of no ordinary mental power, a free, unfettered child of genius. He wielded the weapons of Divine truth, at times, so fearlessly and playfully, that one could only turn away, as we would avert our eyes from a thoughtless child toying and trifling with sharp tools. Yet did he not want the true reverence of the heart, nor the depth of feeling which could give touches of true pathos to his sermons, when he called sinners to repentance. Mrs. Newton and her daughters heard him preach on the following Sunday at Brunswick Chapel, from a text which perhaps many of his old hearers may not have forgotten: "Fear not, only believe." The sermon was remarkable for its evangelical simplicity; and, assuredly, no bereaved parent who might happen to be present could listen unmoved to his concluding appeal, which was probably a flash of bright thought there and then suggested by the sight of a mother's black bonnet before him in the gallery. "But thou sayest, 'My daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. Ay, ay, you're too late, now: it's but a fortnight since it was tottering beside me in the kitchen, prattling and talking to me and it's father;

but it sleeps by itself in the dark, cold church-yard now, down t' lane; and when I try to fold up it' little Sunday frock, and see it' little cap and little bonnet hanging on the peg, my heart fair breaks.' Nay, but *I* say unto *thee*," and here the preacher's voice rung through the large chapel, "Fear not, only believe."

Miss Rebecca Newton was at this time with her sister Caroline, at the village of Colton, not far from Barwick, while her youngest sister and brother remained at home; and in their country rambles they often heard of the good evangelist "Billy Dawson," and of his labours amongst the poor in his neighbourhood. Methodism had a strong hold upon the affections of the people in that part of Yorkshire; and there were few of the villagers, of whatever religious denomination they might be, who in times of sickness, or on the approach of death, did not send for "praying men," or "praying women," from the "Methodises." The village Missionary Meeting, too, was not seldom as full of interest to the labouring classes, around Leeds, as the annual village wake; and on these occasions, during his six years' residence in that neighbourhood, Mr. Newton was often seen, his head a little above those of others, who were crowded in a double gig which had received the name of the "Gospel chariot." Some worthy friend was always ready

to receive the "preachers from Leeds" at his hospitable board; and while "George," the Circuit-horse, was led steaming to the stable, the lady of the house was making tea and passing cheesecakes to her guests, and the good man consulting with his peers, "as how we mun' have a 'phizzing' collection." The meeting and the speeches followed; some of them racy and queer enough. "Billy Dawson" was sometimes a little too much like the poet in "Peter Bell," whose imagination carried him off in his boat beyond his hearers; or he was jocose, and drew forth roars of laughter; but Mr. Newton's powers of oratory, which he could adapt to the learned or to the unlearned, acted as a check upon anything that might not harmonize with the Christian character of the meeting.

Mrs. Newton's domestic happiness was clouded in the following year by the alarming illness of her daughter Rebecca, who was still at Colton for the benefit of her health. "We are as well as usual," she had written to her mother and sister a few days previously, "and spend our time very pleasantly, reading, sewing, walking, or visiting; and now I want you to help me. S——'s husband has deserted her; I have obtained the address of her daughter, and I want you to call and explain," &c. In a long walk occasioned by this painful case,

she had exhausted her strength, and an attack of severe inflammation of the lungs speedily followed. For a time there seemed no hope of her recovery ; but she had not religion to seek in the sick-room. She could smile in the prospect of death, and trust in the merits of her Saviour. "How thankful I am," Mr. Newton writes to Mrs. Newton, who was at Liverpool on a visit to her married daughter, "that my girl is pious !" In a letter to Rebecca he says : "Fear not ; you are building on the sure foundation : and try to venture more fully on Christ, while you calmly, and prayerfully, and believingly wait for a clearer evidence of your acceptance in the Beloved." Mr. Newton's arduous duties prevented him from spending as much time with her as he could have wished ; and, in his absence, her friend, the clergyman of the parish in which she was staying, as also his wife, were assiduous in their kindness and attention. After her recovery, the excellent friends at Leeds obtained a pleasant house in the country, which they engaged during the remaining four years of Mr. Newton's residence amongst them, that she might have the advantages of country air, while enjoying at the same time the benefit of a mother's attention. Burley-Grange was just two miles from the town, and situated on the rising ground above *Bramley* and *Kirkstall*, and within an easy

walk of the picturesque abbey. It was a straggling old place, and one room was fitted up with desk and forms for the purposes of Divine service. In this the Misses Newton taught a class of village children, a kind of Sunday-school ; while every alternate week the people of the village flocked in to "hear preaching." "I have preaching now in my own hired house," said Mr. Newton, laughingly, as he pointed out this domestic oratory to one of his brethren; and not a few good sermons have been heard in that unique lecture-room. "We were very happy at Burley. If the spirit haunts the place we have loved best," says Mrs. Newton, "my ghost will wander about those dark trees surrounding the house where I have so often stood to listen for the rumbling of the wheels of the old stage on the road below, and watch for my husband's arrival. I never wished to go from home ; but once I had occasion to visit my family at Liverpool, and well remember moving stealthily up to the window to take my girls by surprise. There they were, with their brother, and our dear friend Miss H——. The blinds were up, and the bright fire-light shone upon their happy faces. How thankful I felt for my home !"

Again she records her gratitude to the Almighty Father and "God of the families of the earth" in her diary : "Still I am spared

to tell of Thy goodness, O Lord. ‘How do Thy mercies close me round!’ I bless Thee for the light in my heart; for the usefulness of my beloved husband; and for the children Thou hast given me. What shall I render unto the Lord? O that in the day when we appear before our Maker, each one that has sat round our table under the paternal roof may have a place at the festal board of heaven! I am ashamed of my unworthiness; I have to record coldness of love, neglected opportunities, worldly and trifling conversation. Be not Thou extreme to mark what is amiss! I am hastening on towards the close of my pilgrimage. Let Thy grace descend upon me more abundantly in my declining days. As eternity draws nearer, may I live in closer union with my blessed Redeemer. Help me to turn my eye from myself to Thee. Be Thou to me wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”

About this time Miss Caroline Newton had a serious attack of illness, while on a visit to her friends at Stockton-upon-Tees, and her sister Mary Ann was called upon to hasten to her bed-side. The danger was over before she arrived. Mr. and Mrs. Walker had done all that kindness could suggest; but the days seemed long before she was able again to write to her mother, and assure her that she hoped

to return home shortly. "I think my attack was like dear papa's seizure when he was at Edinburgh," she writes; "and, like him, I had the happy sense of the Divine favour and blessing that raised me far above the fear of death. No doubt, no fear, but confidence in a God who is all love." She returned home in the course of a few weeks; and was in the autumn of the same year united in marriage to Mr. Robert Gill, of Easingwold. "My Caroline has left us," says Mrs. Newton, "for another home; and I try to rejoice in her happiness; but it has been with sad tears, when I thought of the separation."

An event which caused her much more uneasiness at this time was Mr. Newton's anticipated visit to America. It had been long talked of; and the Conference having selected him as its Representative, she had given her consent. But as the spring of 1840 drew near, she shrunk from the trial. "The vows of the Lord are upon me," she had said, when appealed to for her decision,—Mr. Newton having kindly declined to yield to the wishes of his brethren without her acquiescence,—"and I think I have never interfered with anything that appeared to be your duty to the church." But a tone of sadness mingles with expressions of thankfulness, as we peruse her diary of this date. "The dreaded hour of our separation ap-

proaches," she says. "With my eye of faith fixed upon the cross of Christ, I can surmount what may await me,—the absence of my husband, even in a foreign land. In the loneliest hours, if I can simply look to Thee, light shines in my heart :—

When sleepless on my bed I lie,
When heaves my breast the anxious sigh,
Or silently I dry the tear,
Thy blessed name the gloom can cheer !
And hope in Thee imparts a ray
Of light more dear than dawn of day."

Mrs. Newton accompanied her husband to Liverpool, and saw him embark on board a vessel on the morning of April 1st. His friend Mr. Souter, of Castle-Donington, accompanied him, having consented to accompany him in his wanderings. This was a source of great satisfaction. After taking leave of him, Mrs. Newton, in a carriage in which she was seated, along with her two eldest daughters, moved slowly on to the house of her son-in-law, Mr. Paulet, from which she was able to keep the vessel in sight until it was lost in the horizon. She then retired to her room, remembering that the friends at Leeds had arranged to hold a meeting at twelve o'clock, for special prayer for her husband's safety and usefulness ; and Mr. Newton in the solitude of his cabin united *his* supplications with theirs.

“ I felt much at parting with my beloved children,” says Mr. Newton, in his journal ; “ but when it came to the last, and I had to sever myself from my dearest wife and dear B——, it was almost more than I could sustain. Dr. Bunting arrived just in time to see me off, and many old friends were on the pier. I got behind the ship’s poop, where I remained till I got the last look of my dearest Eliza, and saw the last wave of her handkerchief. I then retired to my berth, and joined our friends in prayer, and felt power to resign my *all* into the hands of Providence. On Thursday, the second morning, the Welsh coast was still in sight. On Saturday we passed Cape-Clear, the last point of Irish land. And now, thou great Atlantic, we are fairly on thy bosom ; and this fine ship is tossed like a feather on thy mighty waves. On Sunday I preached from John i. 45, to an attentive audience. Towards noon the weather became boisterous, the deck was ever and anon covered with the waters, and the ship rolled greatly. But Thou, O Lord, art our defender. On Monday I saw a vessel *homeward-bound*. Ah, I doubt not but *we* shall be spared to meet again in health and comfort.—To-day, 13th, two small birds alighted on the ship : the plumage and the shape of these little creatures are different from any *I have known*, and remind me that I am now

far from the land of my birth, and from those to me most dear. But,

‘Though mountains rise and oceans roll,
They cannot sever soul from soul’

Yesterday evening we had prayers in the ladies’ cabin, and sang,

‘O Thou who camest from above.’

[The hymn sung by his daughters at family-prayers.] How was I reminded of sweet home ! It is fourteen long days since I came on board, and since I saw my beloved wife. Well, all this is at the Lord’s command. May He grant His special blessing. How I long to be at my public work again !”

Mr. Newton’s visit to the United States was as successful, under the Divine blessing, as the best wishes of his friends could have anticipated.

Upon Mrs. Newton’s return to Leeds, her friends did all in their power to make his long absence bearable. His first letter arrived at length ; and then, after a short interval, a packet of papers. From these we cannot refrain from quoting two or three extracts, making our selection from the “Commercial Advertiser,” the “State Gazette,” the “Weekly Messenger,” and “Bennett’s New-York Herald :”—

“We have seldom seen a stronger anxiety

evinced by the religious world of this city than on Tuesday evening last, when the Rev. Robert Newton, of Leeds, England, preached at the Methodist church in Fifth-street. The building was filled nearly an hour before the time, and thousands were unable to gain admission. We deeply regret that it is not possible to do justice to this eloquent and inspiring sermon within the limits of a newspaper.”—“Mr. Newton preached at John-street on Sunday evening. The interest felt in listening to the discourses of this gentleman seems unparalleled. Thousands, at the evening service, who could not even get to the doors of the overflowing house, blocked up the street and its vicinity.”—“Never have we listened to a preacher more truly unaffected, self-forgetful, and apostolical.”—“The expectations of the crowds that filled Chestnut Church this afternoon have been realised. A great man spoke upon a great theme.”—“His address was logical and argumentative, yet popular. The weakest mind could understand, while the most refined and critical would be gratified. His fervour and sincerity, the agreeable diversity of his topics, (for he abstains from a long-drawn thread,) and the clearness of his ideas, excite interest and command respect. His form consists with the character of his sermons, being large and masculine. His countenance is of

the iron stamp. His features are rugged, but his appearance venerable."

On the 1st of July Mrs. Newton again met her husband at Liverpool, on his arrival in England, and, after spending a few days with the family at Scaforth, returned with him to Leeds. Of course there was a pretty large gathering at Burley-Grange on this happy occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Gill, and the other members of the family then residing in Yorkshire, were assembled under the paternal roof. The house was roomy, and the domestic oratory was converted into a sleeping-apartment. Even "Sister Ann" (now Mrs. Ireland) had come up from the north to meet her brother; and the united family once more joined in singing the familiar hymn,—

"O Thou who camest from above!"

It was on this interesting occasion that "Sister Ann" presented one of her nieces with an acrostic that she had written on her brother Robert's name, long years ago, upon his entering the ministry:—

I.

"Restrain thy grief, forbear, my throbbing heart;
Obedient learn—Heaven's destined us to part;
Betake thyself to God in fervent prayer,
Entreat and wrestle for thy brother there:
Remember, when this fleeting life is o'er,
That kindred souls shall meet to part no more.

II.

“ Now, Lord, descend with light and life divine,
Enrich my brother's heart ; may he be Thine !
With patient faith may he the standard bear,
To fallen man redeeming love declare :
O, may he drink of Zion's sacred stream,
Nor cease to celebrate his Saviour's name !”

It was her last visit to her brother's house. In a few more short years she fell asleep, enduring a somewhat long affliction with true Christian patience, and rejoicing in the “sure and certain hope” of a resurrection to eternal life.

Before leaving Leeds, Mrs. Newton's family paid a brief visit to the Moravian settlement at Fulneck, and saw the scenes in which she had been early interested. After wandering over the secluded burying-ground, in which no stone or slab marks the resting-place of the “departed,” save the small headstone over the grave of the Bishop; and reading that beautiful passage in one of the Moravian prayer-books, “And keep us in everlasting fellowship with our brethren and sisters who have entered into the joy of their Lord, and whose bodies are buried in the earth, whom Thou hast called home,” &c. ; they heard the following particulars of the life of Mrs. P——, who, it will be remembered, was instrumental in leading Mrs. Newton to embrace the faith of the Gospel. This lady had been brought to the knowledge

of Christ under the preaching of Mr. Wesley. She had few religious associates, however; and after her conversion listened to the addresses of Mr. P——, who pleaded that his indifference on the subject of religion would leave her unbiassed by himself, and perfectly at liberty to follow out her own convictions of duty. When the wedding was over, and the usual visits had been paid, she wished to attend the meetings of the Methodists; but no! his *commands* forbade it. She submitted to his decision, and attended a church where there was no Gospel to cheer her. But her joy was gone; and although she never lost her trust in her Saviour, it was not until she was left a widow, and Mr. Wesley, her early teacher, was dead, that she was able to associate again with those who were “her own company.”

Mr. Newton was not permitted to spend much of his time with his family at Burley after his return from the United States. The little pocket-book in which he was accustomed to make a note of the places of his intended visits is filled up, at this period, from Monday to Saturday, the year through. On Sunday he was punctual at his appointment in Leeds, and on Saturday evening his family always awaited his arrival at home. It was a sort of festive eve, looked for alike by the mistress, children, and servants: *even the favourite dog lay with his nose to the*

door, and announced his master's arrival with a quick bark of delight. Tea followed, and pleasant talk; and what a heavy packet of letters had then to be opened, and given to one of the family to answer, containing invitations to missionary meetings, chapel anniversaries, and other public services!

The celebration of the Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism took place during Mrs. Newton's residence with her husband at Burley. No one who was present can have forgotten the interesting opening-service on the great holiday, when, after the hymn was sung,—

“All thanks be to God,” &c.,—

Mr. Newton, on attempting to speak, and reminding the vast crowd that as their fathers and brethren who had remembered 1739 had now passed away, so, long before another centenary, he and all present would have followed, was fairly mastered by his feelings, and compelled to pause. An interval of solemn silence succeeded, in which the whole assembly seemed as if penetrated by the feelings of the speaker, and to stand in imagination in the death-chamber of “their prophets,” praying that the spirit of their departed Elijahs might ever rest on their Elishas. Mr. Newton shortly recovered himself, and carried his hearers along with him again, inciting them to deeds of

Christian benevolence that should live when they were gone. Social meetings followed this well-remembered day; and Mrs. Newton entered cheerfully into the arrangements which the ladies of the congregation were making for their pleasant "tea-drinkings,"—hospitable gatherings, which are not yet forgotten in Leeds.

We are unwilling to quit this interesting sphere of Mr. Newton's labours, and of Mrs. Newton's domestic happiness; for it is pleasing even in fancy to linger in the home made sacred to the memory by its hallowed associations. But the Conference of 1841 drew on. Mr. Newton took leave of his family in June, to attend the meetings of the Irish Conference; and shortly afterwards repaired to Manchester, where the British Conference was this year held. We can scarcely pass over the following letter, written on his arrival at Cork, it is so thoroughly characteristic:—

"MY DEAREST ELIZA, and all that are dear to us both at Burley-Grange,—Here am I, by the good Providence of God, in health and safety, in the city of Cork, after a safe but rather rough passage. We landed about ten this morning, and I joined two gentlemen at a car, six miles, to bring me on to the city. An Irishman exclaimed last night, when nearly all were *dreadfully* sick, 'Sure, the most horrible scene

on the *face of this earth* is the cabin of a *stamer* in a rough sea!' I had the advantage of having so recently crossed the Atlantic. The brethren here are assembled in the Stationing Committee. You will join me in praying that the Great Head of the church may deign to make use of me here, and in Dublin, for His glory and the good of many. How many eyes are looking towards a feeble instrument more unworthy than language can describe! The good Lord be my helper! . . . I hope to take a peep at Seaforth as I return, and to reach home at the latest on Wednesday. Everybody here is talking of the elections. O that all were equally earnest to make their heavenly 'calling and election sure!' Then, all would be safe. Give my love to the brethren, Messrs. Barrett and Cusworth, and friends, and the dear children. God be with you all.

"Your own

"ROBERT NEWTON."

On the 1st of September, 1841, Mr. Newton and his family left Leeds for Manchester. "I gratefully record the mercies of the past," says Mrs. Newton, as we again refer to her diary. "God was with me, when I was separated from my husband during his absence in America. I felt His hand supported me. Now, I shrink from leaving our many kind

friends in Leeds, and quitting the place where I have enjoyed all that is implied in the sweet word *home*; but I would desire to rejoice in any sacrifice that attaches to the cross of Christ."

Their residence in Manchester was at Cheet-ham-hill; and the first year in the preacher's house, in that healthy suburb of the busy city, was not less happy than the preceding ones in Yorkshire. But it pleased Heaven that a heavy trial should be permitted to fall upon Mrs. Newton and the domestic circle during the course of the following summer, in the loss of her gifted and beloved daughter Mary Ann. This interesting young lady was now in her twenty-seventh year, and apparently in the bloom of health. For some time she had lived in the enjoyment of true religion, having been awakened to the knowledge of Divine truth under the ministry of a clergyman of the Church of England. Her catholic spirit, and refined and well-disciplined mind, had, however, led her to connect herself closely with the church to which her father and mother were attached, and she delighted to identify herself with the religious institutions of Methodism. During this summer she had passed several weeks with her sister, Mrs. Gill, in Yorkshire, and afterwards with another sister, who had been lately united in marriage to Mr. Peter R. Jackson. Upon her return home, she undertook a somewhat

long walk on a visit of charity, intending to see the sick person again in the course of a few days. But the Master had "come, and called for her." Typhus fever, with its painful attendants of mental depression and delirium, set in. She dreamed aloud of the heaven of her imagination, and of rest after her long journey. Once or twice, when the fever had abated, she told her sister that she was "ready," and "should soon be among the happy company in the New Jerusalem;" but again all consciousness left her. In a few brief hours death had set his seal upon the face once so fair, and her happy spirit was with the angels in heaven. It was a cloudy morning, that 27th day of July, 1842; but for a moment a beautiful gleam of sunshine fell upon the sorrowing family, as they watched over the bed of death. Alas for our weak faith! that we catch so eagerly at any sensible and tangible manifestation of God's presence in the temple of His creation, and are thankful, in our heart's darkness, for such flickering rays of comfort, instead of trusting simply that *He is Light*,—that *He is Love*. Mrs. Newton was carried from her daughter's chamber in a state of insensibility. She had to bear up under the stroke alone, Mr. Newton being absent at the annual Conference. So sudden was this painful dispensation, that he had not been made aware of his daughter's

serious illness until his friend Dr. Bunting was requested to communicate to him the event of her death. Before his return home Mrs. Newton had recovered her fortitude ; but it was long before she regained her usual spirits. The dear departed one was missed in the lonely house for many summers ; there was no longer her merry laugh, or her light step, in the discharge of household duties, or the pleasant psalm-singing at the hour of evening prayer. The "voice of the daughters of music was brought low," and the shadow of mourning was on the preacher's habitation.

"All is over," Mrs. Newton writes to her daughter, Mrs. Gill ; "and the last of dear Mary Ann has been hid from my sight. But our mercies have been great ; and I desire to say, 'Blessed be the name of the Lord.' I was enabled to give her back to Him, and feel a full confidence that the gift is accepted. I feel more for E—— and F——. . . . Papa got all our letters on Tuesday, and did not notice the dates : one said she was better. I wrote to Dr. Bunting when all was over ; and he called papa out of Conference, with Mr. Jackson and Mr. Marsden, to break it to him. Papa left directly, and Dr. Bunting went in and told the Conference ; and all broke off business, and, kneeling down, prayed for him *and for us*. Who knows how much we owe to

those prayers! Mr. M'Lean afterwards followed him, and got on the omnibus, and told him how they had prayed for him. He said, 'Do not be distressed if the nature of her illness has prevented her from giving you her dying testimony; for we know she was prepared.'"

Many friends came in to comfort Mrs. Newton and her bereaved family; but we are unwilling to forget the words of sympathy of a pious old Lancashire Methodist, who ventured early to obtrude upon the depth of a mother's sorrow. "You m'ont fret," she said, in her simplicity; "for hoo served the Lord, and hoo is gone straight to glory. Du'not grudge Him His own. He has a right to walk round his garden, and pluck the fairest flower, if He wants it."

Others amongst her religious associates, who could appreciate her loss, condoled with her; and their kindness and comforting words were not without effect. With two or three of her family she sought solace, and salutary change of air and scene, by the beautiful waters of Grasmere and Windermere, in Westmoreland. Perhaps no place was better fitted to soothe the wounded spirit. In the stillness of the autumnal evening, where the green plots of pasture dipped into the deep quiet lake, or amid the wildsolitudes of the mountain-side, the voice of the Lord was inwardly heard, giving strength and comfort to His children. The following

little poem on Death appears to have been written at this time :—

“ Trembling, I’ve mark’d thy icy touch and breath,
Thou king of terrors, sin-engender’d Death !
Though few and evil my brief days have been,
Thy dreaded form too often have I seen.

“ I’ve watch’d the dawn of Spring draw forth the sage
To catch the breeze, and dream o’er nature’s page ;
The earth was green, the early flow’rets sweet ;—
He knew not Death was hid beneath his feet.

“ I’ve seen the infant, just awake to light,
Bless its fond mother with a look so bright,
She thought long life was given to her care :
She look’d again,—but only Death was there.

“ I’ve seen the beauteous bride with orange crown’d,
And fairest roses with her tresses bound,—
While the fond bridegroom, gazing on her face,
Felt not the dart of Death in his embrace !

“ The lightsome steps of dancers have I seen,
In halls of state, or on the rural green ;
Each thought Death distant from a scene so fair,—
But, ah, his pale and shadowy form was there !

“ I’ve seen the youth his nightly vigils keep,
And give to learning the just dues of sleep,—
Just when he saw the end of all this care,
Close his last book, and only Death was there.

“ I’ve seen the consecrated temple rise
Whence hallow’d anthems echoed to the skies ;
But ’mid the grandeur of adoring prayer
And Life-adoring throng, lo ! Death was there.

“ And now, he’s thrown his sin-envenom’d dart
O’er the dear circle nearest to my heart :
Fondly I held them with a mother’s care ;
He grasp’d the strongest, ere I felt him there !

“ Whither, O, whither shall my weakness flee ?
For soon, I know, that dart shall find out me.
O, let me shelter, Saviour, in Thy side,
And in Thy bleeding love my terrors hide !”

The venerable poet Wordsworth resided at that time at his beautiful retreat at Rydal-Mount, and was often seen ascending the mountain-steep near his house, ever and anon pausing to rest, and gaze on the surrounding landscape. He was then an aged man ; and no doubt Mrs. Newton’s mind looked on to that period, which now could not be far distant, when the grave should close over him in Grasmere churchyard. How pleasing was it to her, to hear afterwards from a lady, belonging to the Society of Friends, that she had “the comfortable assurance, from her conversation with him, that this great man was one of the company of mystic believers in the Lord Jesus Christ !”

“ A break has been made in my beloved circle,” Mrs. Newton writes, six months after the loss of her daughter ; “ and a louder cry than ever calls me to arise and depart, for ‘ this is not my rest.’ Gratefully I adore the goodness that supported me when that sad tri-


came, and brought death and sorrow into my home. Still, I look back upon that day :

That morning rose—in sunshine rose
To others—not to me.
I watch'd and saw those eyelids close
For evermore on me.

Yet not *for ever* ! We hope to meet again in the morning of the Resurrection, when they who sleep in Jesus God will bring with Him. May I be thankful that my dear husband is still spared to me ; and, though we are often separated here, we have the prospect of spending eternity together.* The last year has been one of much interest in Thy church. Amid conflicting opinions and conflicting parties, let not infidelity triumph. At eventide, when the shadows seem to thicken upon us, 'let it be light.' ”

That was indeed an eventful year in the records of the town of Manchester. In the autumn of 1842, owing to a combination of circumstances, which this is not the place to recount in detail, sixty thousand operatives had paraded the streets, armed with staves and pikes, demanding money or food. The misguided men were happily restrained from doing much mischief. Perhaps many of these poor fellows had not forgotten their boyish lessons in the Sunday-school,—and not a few of them,

* These were the words of Colonel Gardiner, on taking his last leave of his wife.

we are assured, had heard of the duty of submission and obedience to the constituted authorities,—for what district in the city of Manchester is without its guardian angel in the shape of church or chapel? At the period of which we now write the opinions of Robert Owen had been diffused, unhappily, among the working classes. The “Hall of Science,” as it was called, was thrown open on the Sabbath evening; and sad it was to see these ignorant and mistaken men pouring in to hear the Socialist lecture, instead of turning their steps to the house of God. Mrs. Newton and her daughters, after their return home, were often brought into contact with this spirit, in their visits among the working people. Upon one occasion an attempt was made to interrupt a Missionary Meeting by a female Socialist lecturer; but it was, most adroitly, quelled by Mr. Newton. By his persuasive address and easy tact he carried the vast congregation with him, as he descanted on St. Paul’s definition of feminine duty and character.

In the autumn of this year Mr. Newton, or, as we must now say, Dr. Newton, visited his friends in Yorkshire; and a single passage from his letter to his wife after preaching again in their former Circuit may not be uninteresting. “Oxford-Place and old Brunswick were crowded yesterday to overflowing. There is no place

like Leeds, after all, for Wesleyan Methodism. When I looked down at the *old pew*, and thought of those who used to occupy it, I had enough to do to suppress my feelings. Well; there is a house above, and nobler worship there. I passed through Holmfirth last Thursday, '*up the back loyne.*' The house and Bing's-Wood are there yet. What happy days have we spent there! and how many mercies have we received since! We were then young, and the prospect of life was before us: now we are far down the vale of years. But, thanks be unto God, our cup of blessing has never been empty. May we make the most and the best of the time that may yet remain. Tell dear J—— I shall be glad to see '*sweet home,*' and hear the harp, once more. Love to Peter and '*Bibby*' when you see them."

Mr. and Mrs. Newton had removed from Cheet-ham-hill to Broughton, another suburb of Manchester, in the Salford Circuit, in the autumn of 1844. They were welcomed there by their kind friends Mr. and Mrs. Townend, and nothing occurred during their residence in the house adjoining the chapel to ruffle the surface of domestic life. Mrs. Newton was near her married daughters, and several merry little grandchildren were now rising up to claim her interest and affection. Her two unmarried daughters were still under her roof, and her

youngest son was with her during his vacations; while the pleasant neighbourly society around added much to the comfort of her new home.

But as time advanced, and years rolled on, her circle of friends continued to narrow: one and another of her early associates were removed to a better world; the bonds of earthly companionship were broken; while, may we not say, the bonds of hallowed fellowship with friends in heaven grew and strengthened? Life's summer was gone, and she and her husband were fast approaching the frosts and winter of old age. "It seems," says Dr. Newton, in a brief letter addressed to her about this period from the Irish Conference, "it seems as if you and I had outlived our generation. Brother Tobias is gone home. All those who were leading men in the Irish Connexion when I first came into this country are in eternity. And soon *I* must follow. Let me request you to get into the open air as much as possible, and take care of yourself. It looks a long time to the middle of August. But I must be denied the society I love best till then, I fear. O, what a happy release when I get into a train for Manchester!"

Perhaps Dr. Newton's mind was saddened, just at this time, by some of those painful ministerial trials with which he was compelled to meet in the course of his declining years. Those who are acquainted with the histo

Wesleyan Methodism, and know to what we refer, may think it strange that a man of his strength of character, and true moral greatness, could have felt a sting which only derived its poison from malicious falsehood. At an earlier period of his career, we doubt not, he would have met the attacks of anonymous slander with the supreme indifference that they deserved. But he was now no longer young. He had reached an age which ought to have sheltered him from the assaults of envious calumny. Besides, these anonymous attacks upon his character, and upon the characters of others who were associated with him in the sacred office, were supposed to come from men whom he had loved and trusted. And Robert Newton's sensibility was that of a man of love. His heart could not choose but be deeply sensitive, even of an unkind look. Those who knew him, not only in the social circle, where, in the freedom of familiar intercourse, his buoyant spirit threw a charm on all around him, but in the church, in his character as a minister of religion,—will remember that he was a man of tender sympathies. He desired not worldly applause, but to live in the atmosphere of mutual confidence and affection.

Following Mrs. Newton and her family to Stockport North Circuit, to which Dr. Newton was appointed in 1847, we find

that they were received with much kindness by the stewards and friends. Here, as in Manchester, whatever disagreeables may have been met with without, at home all was harmony and sunshine. Under that roof there was nothing to chill the heart's best feelings, or to check the ardour of confidential intercourse. But his own health, and the health of Mrs. Newton, became more feeble as they approached the age of "threescore years and ten,"—the allotted term of man's life. Dr. Newton suffered from a chronic cough, "a churchyard cough," as he often called it; while Mrs. Newton was accustomed to say that she had a constant monitor in her increasing deafness. "I and my husband," she says, in her diary, "are now gently reminded that our time in this 'vale of tears' is passing away. . . . I am enabled to leave *all* with the Providential Disposer of events, and trust in Him as the keeper of my soul and my entire dependence. And when I quit this scene of conflict and perplexity, every mystery shall be cleared up. I shall know not 'in part' but perfectly. O, when that hour comes which shall separate me from all that I hold dear to me in life, may I find Thee near to save! I cannot hear the word as I have been accustomed to do in times past; yet my infirmity is sometimes a source of great comfort, for I am alone

with God when surrounded with company. Yes, time with me is nearly gone, and eternity is at hand. But the love of Christ seems dearer as I draw near the eternal world. I often think, in the seclusion of my own heart, of the mysteries of the home above,—the avocations of ‘the spirits of the just,’ of their bliss, their movements, . . . their intercourse, their light—God and the Lamb;—there can be no darkness where *He* is the Light.

I long the vast beyond to know,
Yet tremble through the gulf to go.

Yet, Holy Lamb! can I shrink to follow where Thou hast led the way? The grave is cold, and the idea of death appalling; but Thou hast lain there in Thy humanity. O, Sun of Righteousness! cause the ‘face of death to smile’ when he comes to me with the awful summons, and make me ready for that call! I have no hope but in Thee. I desire no other refuge. I can, and do, and by Thy grace assisting I *will*, trust Thee, in life, and in death. Thou art a tower to which I may safely fly for shelter when Satan and my heart would say I am unworthy of Thy love. To that love and mercy I fly for help. While I remain here, keep me from the evil of the world; and may I finally rest in Thy presence.”

Notwithstanding her advanced age, and the infirmity of deafness to which Mrs. Newton so

often refers, she visited in the course of this year her daughter, Mrs. Gill ; accompanied by whom she made a short tour through the vale of York, that she might see once more the grave of her father and her brother, and the home of her childhood. The lady who then occupied Skelton-Hall allowed her to stand again on the old hearth of her youth, and to enter the apartment which was made sacred to her by the recollections of the vows and prayers of her first entrance upon the life of faith. Nearly fifty long eventful years had rolled away, bearing with them their tide of joy and hope, sorrow and death ; but the green landscape, and the chamber overlooking field and meadow, were the same. Early blossoms were still on the orchard below, and spring flowers in the garden where she used once to pass her early mornings. She entered the village church, and bent over the two beloved tombs, the inscriptions on which were still legible ; and the altar was before her, where she had stood with her husband on that bright September morning of her wedding-day. But while her heart was occupied with these busy memories of the past, there were but one or two of the villagers who could recollect anything of Miss Nodes of Skelton. Many graves had been opened and closed in that quiet churchyard since the year 1802 ; and there was none no

left to tell how the marriage-bells were rung and broken, in the eager haste of the ringers, and how the young bride left home in that plain Methodist bonnet with her handsome husband, —or how the poor people about the village and the surrounding hamlets felt when they lost their kind sympathizing friend.

Shortly after her return to Stockport Mrs. Newton heard of the sudden death of her son-in-law, Mr. Paulet, of Seaforth, and visited her daughter, that she might assist her in the necessary arrangements for the sad closing scene. "Another break in our family," she writes: "may the painful dispensation be sanctified; and if the cares of earth press heavily, may we feel that underneath are 'the everlasting arms.' I and my husband are spared, while others much younger than ourselves are taken. Yet we are drawing nearer home: we feel it by the long fatigues of the journey, 'the greatness of the way.' Often did I think during the past year that it would be my last summer on earth; but I have been preserved. My reason and thinking powers are, mercifully, perhaps unimpaired; and if I cannot enjoy conversation, my thoughts seem to get new wings in my silence; and I am grateful for the aid of glasses, by the use of which I can read and work as I was wont to do. We are entering upon the last six months of our resi-



dence at Stockport. May the Lord be our leader and guide in the appointment of our new earthly home; and may my dear husband be spared in health, and the infirmities of age come to him only as gentle harbingers of the promised rest."

Dr. Newton was again appointed, in 1850, to Liverpool, and his family took possession of their fresh home in the following September. "We live on the Cheshire side of the river," Mrs. Newton writes to one of her daughters. "I had some anxiety at first at the prospect of my husband's having to return home late after preaching in Liverpool; but he bears it pretty well. The house we occupy is small, but so near the river that we seem to live on board a vessel. O, how I enjoy the moonlight, at high water, when the lordly steamers pass near our window!" The beautiful situation was pleasing to Mrs. Newton and her family; but Dr. Newton's health failed rapidly from the period of his appointment to this Circuit. It was, as he had often anticipated, when speaking of it to his wife, his *last* regular appointment. In the second year of his ministry in this sphere of labour he was attacked with those symptoms which eventually ended in the seizure that occasioned his death. Indeed, it became now necessary for him to retire from public life. The kindness of those friends who su

gested and carried out the arrangements for presenting a United Testimonial to himself and Dr. Bunting had, in this year, smoothed the way, and added comfort to his declining years. But he loved his work, and it was hard for him to relinquish the hallowed labour which had continued uninterrupted for half a century. In conjunction with his son-in-law, Mr. Jackson, he at length decided upon taking a house at Southport. This determination was much in harmony with Mrs. Newton's wishes, and the family left Liverpool in the summer of 1852. But though the air of Southport was salubrious, and the situation and society there everything that could be desired, Dr. Newton's heart yearned after his home in Yorkshire. He longed for the bracing stillness of the moors, where he had spent his early youth, and to hear again the hymns that "Sister Mary" used to sing, when they began life together,—far away at Roxby. The busy stir of the rising fashionable watering-place did not accord with his heart's sympathies. The noise, and the company, and the whirl of the wheels of carriages and stages, disturbed the repose which it was evident he so much needed. He still retained a measure of health, and his amiable temper and guileless conversation yet threw their charm over the home-circle, now *often* enlivened by the presence of his beloved

daughter Rebecca, and her husband and children. But when the shadows of evening closed, and the curtains were drawn, and the sounds in the street without well-nigh hushed, he loved to sit in the easy-chair, calling back the memory of those buried years, and the spectral band of dear friends who had long entered the invisible world. Once he paid a visit to Mrs. Gill, accompanied by his youngest daughter, and went with her to attend the service at the little chapel at Crayke. The barn-like building was crowded to the doors; and as he returned to Mr. Gill's house through the misty fields, he seemed to regain something of his old buoyancy of feeling. "Did you notice the concluding hymn?" he said, as he hummed it over again. "I have never heard it since I was at Roxby. My sister Mary used to sing that hymn when I was a young lad. What a dream is human life!"

While residing at Southport Dr. and Mrs. Newton celebrated the jubilee of their wedding. Many of their children were present, and not a few of their grandchildren. The tables were ornamented with the choice wild flowers of September, and the innocent mirth and prattle of childhood mixed with the sober and earnest reflections of venerable age. "My home abounds with comforts and indulgences," says Mrs. Newton; "and though the clouds of evening

seem gathering, I still trust at 'eventide it shall be light,'—light in Thy presence. I try daily to call my heart to rise from earth to brighter scenes. I know my hope is cast 'within the veil.' I have much to lament,—in my own unworthiness, my coldness, my wanderings in devotion; but, O Lord, do Thou view me, not as in myself, but in the face of Thine Anointed One!"

The following little poem appears to have been written at this period, during her residence at the sea-side:—

"'Peace, be still!' the Saviour said,
And the elements obey'd:
Their Creator's power could charm
The rough billows to a calm.
O that I may ever hear
That voice whisper in my ear,
Through the grasp of every ill,
'I am with Thee: Peace, be still!'

"When the bitter tear I shed
O'er the absent or the dead;
When I secretly bemoan
Comforts fled, or dear ones gone;
When my faith so languid lies,
Hope receives no fresh supplies,—
Let my sad rebellious will
Hear Thee whisper, 'Peace, be still!'

"When my sinfulness I see,
Vile, unholy, unlike Thee,
In Thy Spirit's purest beam
So unworthy do I seem,—

Scarce dare lift my eyes above,
Doubting, Saviour, of Thy love,—
Let that whisper cheer me still,
‘I am with thee : Peace, be still !’ ”

Again her diary continues : “ May I go where Thou dost lead. Let Thy Spirit guide me, and Thy love influence all my actions. May I not shrink from the cross, but follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. I look up to Thee, my sure Refuge. I would rest on the Rock of Ages, or be hid in the cleft of that Rock for ever. O, how dear to me is the truth that God can be just, and yet the ‘justifier of him that believeth in Jesus!’ ”

In the spring of 1854 Dr. Newton and his family returned to his native county, a house having been taken at Easingwold, at which retired country-town he desired to complete the days of his earthly pilgrimage. Mrs. Newton left Southport with much regret. Perhaps she anticipated the trial that so shortly awaited her. “ I took a sad leave,” she says, “ of Mr. and Mrs. Sargent, and many other kind friends ; and was most unwilling to quit the old sand-hills, which were in my mind linked to many sweet reminiscences of my married life, when the children were young, and my dear mother was with me. But God sees the end from the beginning, and He knows what is for the best.” It was more painful yet for her to leave

Mr. and Mrs. Jackson, and her prattling little grandchildren ; but her residence in Yorkshire was in close proximity to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gill, and she looked with pleasure to the prospect of meeting them and their family. She went to Easingwold a little before her husband, to prepare the house for his reception, accompanied by one of her daughters. When the hurry and excitement of the removal were over, he joined her ; but he looked ill and fatigued as he entered the door of his last earthly dwelling, and threw a look of satisfaction round the snug parlour. Two or three friends soon came in to welcome and chat with him ; but even the pleasant social talk of the evening soon proved too much for him. He longed for rest—for *repose* ; and it pleased God to send it him in the course of a few short days. Still, Mrs. Newton apprehended no immediate danger, as she strolled with him in the garden the following morning. His cough was no worse ; the attacks of difficult breathing were not more frequent. His spirits had rallied a little, and he was beginning to take an interest in what he playfully called “ the farm,” feeding the pigeons, and caressing the pony, and giving directions about the pig and the poultry. Then, when evening came, he would listen to his favourite hymns on the harp, often accompanying his daughter with his own deep voice

to the air, which once—fifty-four years ago, we may remember—he had sung in Dicky Burdsall's parlour, behind the shop :—

“ Away, my unbelieving fear !
Fear shall in me no more have place !
My Saviour doth not yet appear,
He hides the brightness of His face.
And shall I therefore let Him go,
And basely to the tempter yield ?
No ;—in the strength of Jesus, no ;—
I never will give up my shield.

“ Although the vine its fruit deny,
Although the olive yield no oil,
The withering fig-tree droop and die,
The field elude the tiller's toil,
The empty stall no herd afford,
And perish all the bleating race ;
Yet I will triumph in the Lord,
The God of my salvation praise !”

Or he would ask for the air of the “ Quaker's Dream ;” and tell how old “ Dicky ” had heard it in his boyish days, and had afterwards been haunted by the pleasant melody, till he determined to use it for his Master's glory, along with the little hymn beginning,—

“ The voice of free grace
Cries, Escape to the mountain !”

It is evident that Dr. Newton anticipated his

speedy departure, and was now hourly awaiting the summons of his Lord.

“We shall have so many pleasant drives to country Missionary Meetings, this summer!” said one of his daughters, endeavouring to touch the old chord, and knowing that his heart would vibrate. His eye met hers, and there was something of his old look, as his face lighted up. But he only smiled, and said, “Never again.”

The closing scene of this great and good man’s life has been detailed at length by one of his daughters in his Biography by Mr. Jackson. The following particulars are taken from her narrative:—

Dr. Newton’s last and fatal seizure was on the morning of April 25th, just fifteen days after his arrival at Easingwold. Contrary to the expectation of his medical attendant, he lingered until the following Sunday morning; and during this interval of extreme physical prostration, he preached his glorious dying sermon,—gave witness with his latest breath to the power of Divine truth. If at times his language was incoherent, it was the incoherence of broken and disjointed prayers and praises. Once he attempted to repeat the hymn he had been so long accustomed to sing on the Saturday evening at family-worship, the second verse of which is,—

“Jesus, confirm my heart’s desire;
To work, and speak, and think for Thee,” &c.

In the service of his Master he had nearly reached the concluding scene of all, and was conscious that “death” would soon “make the sacrifice complete.” His powers of articulation had become imperfect, his voice was nearly gone, but still he “smiled, and praised, and waved his hand.” On the Thursday morning he called for each member of his family then present, and took leave of them by name. After a short pause he looked for Mrs. Newton, and, grasping her hand, said, feebly, “Farewell, my own love.” On Friday he conversed with apparent ease, exhorting those around him to live to God; and when his daughter, Mrs. Gill, was repeating the verse of the hymn, “Away, sad doubt and anxious fear!” he interrupted her, saying, “I have no fear. ‘Perfect love casteth out fear.’” On Saturday morning the last struggle drew on, his difficulty of breathing increased, and it was evident he was entering into the valley of the shadow of death. Mrs. Gill, whose clear voice he could always hear, repeated the hymn beginning,

“Stand the’ omnipotent decree :
Jehovah’s will be done!”

He made an attempt to speak, and we could catch a few disjointed sentences; such as, “I am the Resurrection,”—“God,”—“Jesus Christ,

the ransom of sinners,"—"Praise the Lord, all the earth." In about an hour he sank back exhausted; his lips moved, as if in prayer; he folded his hands on his breast, and was heard pouring out his soul in intercession for his family. By putting the ear close to his mouth, we distinctly heard his dying testimony: "I am going to leave you; but God will be with you." "Farewell; I am going to join the myriads of angels and archangels before the throne of God. Farewell sin, and farewell death. Praise the Lord. Praise Him for ever." He again made an effort to speak, and we heard him say, "Praise God—praise—;" and at one o'clock on Saturday the voice that had so often led the prayers and praises of the congregation was hushed for ever.

We cannot refrain from copying the subjoined verses, which appeared, we know not from whose pen, in one of the provincial papers:—

"He had sat down to rest,
His girdle loosed, and laid his sandals by,
Wayworn, and turning to his Father's home
His waiting eye.

"We have beheld the clouds
Drink in the glory of the' approaching sun,
Till all transparent, kindling in his beams,
They seem'd but one.

"Thus earnestly he gazed,
When sudden fell upon his raptured ear
The chimes of that far temple, sought so long,
But now so near;—

“ And on his face there stream’d
A holy radiance from the shrine above,
Flooding each feature with the mingling light
Of joy and love.

“ He waved his hand and smiled,
From the deep bliss of his exulting heart
Pouring rich eloquence ; then silent lay,
Nigh to depart.

“ A voice celestial spake,—
‘ Greatly beloved, the Master calleth thee ;
Thy mansion is prepared, the triumph waits ;
Rise, follow me.’

“ Then, ‘ Farewell sin and death !’
And straightway he was gone. O boundless joy !
Safe gather’d to his fathers, to their home,
To their employ.

“ Gone to thy Saviour’s rest ;
Star of the church, how bright thy setting here !
What then the glory, when at His right hand
Thou shalt appear !”

The day of the funeral came, and Mrs. Newton saw the slow procession move from the house to the church, followed by several eminent ministers, and crowds of rustic friends, singing hymns of praise. But she bore up bravely in the loneliness of her own room. He was gone ; but she was following fast behind. She knew their separation would be short, even at the longest ; it might be but a few brief months. On the 28th of May, four

weeks after her husband's death, she has courage enough to resume her diary, and thus records her experience:—"One month only has passed, and I am a widow. The sun has risen as bright, and the moon has shone the same, as when *he* was with me. All nature is unchanged; but I have felt a change come over me unknown before. Yet, I had help: the arm of Omnipotence has upheld me; and eternity appeared so near, the scenes of time seemed to lose their interest and importance in the blaze of its glories, and in the prospect of our speedy re-union. My feet seemed firm, and the path of life as brass beneath me. Such is the Divine promise. I felt power to plead for its fulfilment, and it was mine. Gratefully and humbly I trust it was, and *is*, mine. As my 'day' is, so will be my 'strength.' The wish of my heart is, that my whole powers of being should centre in devotion to the God of my mercies, and Saviour of my soul. Thou knowest, O holy Lamb, for what I prayed in the anguish of my heart, when his life was passing away. May that prayer be heard!
. The hours of bereavement have become a melancholy calm, but not a forgetfulness of the past. I have much to be thankful for! Give me more love to Thee, my long-known Saviour. Let Thy Spirit yet 'more sensibly within me dwell.'"

She had continued to correspond with the companion of her girlhood throughout the long period of her married life ; and among the many kind and interesting letters of sympathy which she at this period received, we find a touching one from her oldest friend, Mrs. D——, who was herself now an aged widow.

After Dr. Newton's death, circumstances, which it is needless to refer to in these pages, led Mrs. Newton to reside with her youngest son, who was then the curate of a rural village in Yorkshire. Her love for the seclusion of country life naturally deepened with her advancing years. The impressions of her childhood, imbibed in her early home at Skelton, threw their spell over her old age. She loved to cherish the tastes and follow the employments of her youth,—to tend the flowers, to ramble, within an easy walk of the house, in search of ferns and mosses ; showing her sympathy for the poor and the sick in the neighbourhood, by sending them little dinners of her own preparation. Her deafness shut her out from all the pleasure of conversational intercourse. The members of her family had to raise their voices so high to enable her to hear, that she began to hold all communication through writing. And the pen and pencil were ever her solace. She used to sit by the window, holding communion with her own

heart, sometimes pouring out her feelings in such verses as the following :—

“ I follow, with a tearful eye,
The setting sun in yonder sky ;
It tells a tale to me :
It says, ‘ Like my declining ray,
So is your life’s departing day,
Soon its last hour will be.’

* * * *

“ ’Tis true ! but I, like thee, shall rise—
Shall lift my head in brighter skies,
When night and death are o’er !
Thy boasted glow is but a ray
From Him whose light will be my day
When time shall be no more.”

But one or two passages from her letters of this period will give us the best picture of the manner in which she now passed her time.

“ I thought your letter long in coming, and am thankful to hear that you and dear C—— are well. The old man at B—— was living on Friday. I drove J—— with pony, and we called. Our friend from S—— and a preacher who had been attending the Missionary Meeting had also seen him, but I fear he was hardly conscious of anything. Mr. D—— is very ill. I have sent him some soup. I spend my days in working and reading. . . . Many have been my prayers for the Conference in

my lonely room, usually concluding with a petition against party-feeling. The papers are now very interesting; but it fatigues my eyes to read long." Again, she writes to Mrs. Gill: "How beautiful is the morality of the New Testament! I have been reading it through again. Few other books suit me now. I am sorry your governess is leaving you; for I think she is a Christian. I have done with party-names; but that one word [Christian] is a standard of all that is good. O my C——, looking back upon my long life, and remembering so many changes, and on the verge of that great change, eternity, how little all worldly cares appear! and yet how often they intrude!"

Mrs. Newton had the satisfaction in her declining life of having most of her family near her. In the spring of 1860 her son left Yorkshire for the south of England. She accompanied him to his residence at Shelley, where, in the retirement of a village-parsonage, the last six years of her life were past. Her extreme deafness had long rendered it vain for her to attend the public services of the Lord's house, except on the occasions of holy communion. Nor could she latterly maintain any fellowship in the way of conversational intercourse with her Methodist friends. The quarterly ticket was passed to her in a letter,

from her friend Mrs. W——, of Ilkley, with whom she managed to correspond until within a few months of her death. But the diary of sixty years is continued with little interruption, and the familiar writing-desk is stored with little hymns and poems, until the firm hand of youth and mature age becomes the feeble, shaky scratch of the pen which is barely legible. We have nothing to record of this period of her life. The diary must tell its own story :—

“The loss of memory is great ; but I find some little amusement in the trifles in which I can engage without fatigue. Thinking of the past so much at times occasions a melancholy feeling ; but I feel it is the means of raising my thoughts from things earthly to things heavenly. I can only ask for a sanctified use of my many mercies, and that my remaining hours may be consecrated to God. I feel grateful for the power of thought. Redeeming love is often on my mind ; and though I am tempted sometimes with doubts and thoughts which seem to say,—

‘O, can it be,
The Lord of heaven should die for me ?’

I try to dispel them and take refuge in the eternal promise. Here I rest, looking for the coming of death. Retracing the events of my

past life, I see many sins of omission and commission, many errors and infirmities; but I know that Jesus died. I desire no other refuge :

‘ Every moment, Lord, I need
The merit of Thy death.’

Blessed Saviour! Thou didst become incarnate for us, and knowest the infirmities of our frail nature, and its struggles. Thou art my Advocate, and with Thee I trust my case. Every day says, ‘ Be ye ready ; for the Son of man cometh.’ ”

On the 31st of April, 1864, the anniversary of Dr. Newton’s death, she writes :—

“ April ! foretelling beauteous summer nigh,
Why do I meet thy promise with a sigh ?
Nor give one smile thy early flowers to meet,
Which spread their fragrance now beneath my feet ?
Ah, memory tells a tale,
That brings me back one April past :
And long as thought and seasons last,
That April I bewail.

“ As if it would my thoughtless heart beguile,
It open’d to me with a treacherous smile,
And told of home, sweet home, and earthly love,
And joyful promise of our home above.
But, ah, a change was near ;
And e’er thy brief spring days departed
Grim death beheld me broken-hearted,
Without one hope to cheer.

“But God was near : I sought the help Divine,
The widow's help, and found the promise mine :
And in that awful hour, I seem'd to meet
One from above to guide my wandering feet,
And calm my troubled breast !—
Long have I linger'd here, and still remain,
To see thee, beauteous April, come again,
Finding in God my rest.”

At this period Mrs. Newton often referred with interest to the last letter her husband had received, now twenty years ago, from her old friend Mr. Brackenbury ; in which, after expressing his wish to welcome him once more under his roof, he says, “I now feel confident I am fast hastening to the grave, and forcibly feel the truth of that passage in Holy Writ ; for to me, indeed, the ‘grasshopper has become a burden,’ the ‘silver cord loosed,’ and ‘the golden bowl broken :’ yet I trust I can through mercy say, ‘The will of the good and gracious Lord be done.’” Many circumstances of her life were fading from her recollection ; but not the vision of the cross, or the remembrance of those good angels who were about her path when she stood as on the threshold of her religious warfare. If she had, at moments, forgotten the names of her own children, she could recall the sainted Mrs. P——, and Mrs. Brackenbury, and Mr. Hemington, and Richard Burdsall ; and tell her daughter pleasant stories of their doings at York, in the well-remembered year

1800. "Ah, I longed to depart then," she would say; "but I had not so many earthly attractions. I wished I had lived in the days of the noble 'army of martyrs,' and might have given my life for the love of Christ. But perhaps I did not know myself. I was young in Christian experience, and often hasty in condemning those that differed from me: still—

Blest be the hours! remembrance calls them sweet,
When Jesu's love could every sorrow drown:
Lost in ecstatic rapture at His feet,
I long'd, for Him, to wear a martyr's crown.
How poor appear'd the idle toys of earth!
How mean its pleasures—unsubstantial all!
My rising soul, exulting in her birth,
Sprang to her home, and burst their hateful thrall.
And shall these trifles now again entwine
Their baneful fetters round my ransom'd heart?
No; such low thoughts for ever I resign,
And fear no ill but from my Lord to part!

How blest to be for ever with the Lord! to rest in His presence who is Infinite Purity and Infinite Love! Surely one ought to be anxious to depart."

We are unwilling to pass over the following verses, found amongst her papers: though they are not dated, they were evidently written very late in life:—

"I ask for faith to realise the bright,
The dazzling, prospects of yon heavenly light!

Through mists and errors, sinful though I be,
I catch its rays ; but, ah, too quick they flee !
And earthly scenes of care and trouble rise,
To veil the cheering prospect from my eyes.
But let me view with steadfast faith the grace
That beams eternal in my Saviour's face,
And calmly rest where His mild glories shine,
And feel His intercession ever mine :
That prospect can a ray so bright impart,
As hides all other objects from my heart,—
And gazing on day's orb, in noontide pride,
Throws darkness over all the world beside."

Surely, few but those who have leaned daily on "the staff of religion," and whose lives have been regulated by the temperance and wisdom which are from above, could have written thus after the lapse of fourscore summers.

Soon after Mrs. Newton's arrival at Shelley she heard of the death of the only surviving member of the family at Roxby. Mr. Francis Newton died at his house at Thorpe, near Whitby, at the advanced age of eighty-one, having completed a long life of earnest faith and duty, and relying to the end on the merits of his Lord and Saviour. In the course of the following year Mr. and Mrs. Gill lost their youngest son, a fine promising boy at school. "I trust your dear boy is with the Lord," Mrs. Newton writes to her daughter. "I feel it a long time since I talked with you in my way. I am gently dealt with under many

infirmities. All are dying around me of my old friends, and I feel my own life very uncertain; but I trust I can leave my all in His hands. He is my constant upholder in my long hours of loneliness." Again, she says, "I can sit still, and look at the beauties of nature, feeling that, old as I am, I am in no hurry to depart and leave the dear ones I see around me. How is this consistent with having a desire to be with Christ? I can only leave all this, and appeal to His love and faithfulness. If Calvary's tale is true, I want no other hope. I can trust my sins and failures to His mercy."

But the insatiable shaft of death was destined to strike thrice, and again, before the expiration of two more years. In the spring of 1863 Mrs. Jackson, whose health had never been strong from her childhood, was again attacked with inflammation of the lungs, and, despite all the care and attention of physicians, or the lavished affection of her attached husband and family, she sank into the grave, breathing out her redeemed spirit in the language of old Simeon: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." She had many dear ties to life; and at the commencement of her illness she had told her husband that, though she was ready to depart, if it were the Lord's will, she

would wish to live a little longer. But as she drew nearer the gates of the celestial city, the faith of the Christian triumphed over all earthly love. It was the end of a pure and blameless life. "I bless the Author of life for such a daughter," says Mrs. Newton, "even though she is taken from me. I am satisfied that my loss, and her family's loss, is her gain. I soon must follow. May I be prepared for the call. Aged beyond the usual term of life, I cannot expect to continue here much longer. My eyes grow dim. Reading is a difficulty; yet I have many mercies. My memory fails me; yet I can always retain the sense of Almighty Love in the life and death of my risen Saviour. Thou art my hope, my trust. All else fails me; but mercy is Thine, and there *I rest*. Thou art my all, my only Saviour.—July 26th, 1863."

The tokens of mourning had not been worn ten months for Mrs. Jackson before another member of Mrs. Newton's family, one who had been for many long years the source of a mother's constant anxiety, and a subject of her prayers, was called away by death. He died at the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Gill, after a short illness, just when the bells had ushered in the year 1864. He departed in penitence and hope, and was buried in the cemetery at Middlesborough. A simple cross marks his

last resting-place. "*Si quid boni noscis, dic; si non, tace.*" When the event of his unexpected death was communicated to Mrs. Newton, she merely asked, "Is there hope?" Her daughter answered, "The telegraphic message was, 'He died in peace.'" "Then, thank God!" was the reply. She afterwards heard, that he had spoken during his painful illness penitently and calmly of his trust in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, of his confidence that his prayers were heard, falling back upon the truths that he had been taught in the nursery at Wakefield, and finding solace in the hymn which his sister's children were so often singing in the room below that in which he slept:—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

"Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark spot;
To Thee whose love can cleanse each blot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

"Just as I am, Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come:" &c.

His last words were, "I am going home.

Amen." We are not forbidden to trust that his "tuneful soul" is now with the redeemed harmonious company in heaven.

"Deaf, and blind, and old," says Mrs. Newton, again writing to Mrs. Gill, "yet I can manage to write a line to you and your husband, for your kindness to those dear to me. Life passes away like a dream, and all around me dies away. I must soon follow. To One alone I look for help in that hour which shall separate this worn body from the still unchanged and undying soul. This year has begun in sorrow; but all has been mixed with mercy. May we be found watching!"

In the spring following she had a serious attack of illness, and her medical adviser did not give the slightest hope of her recovery. On hearing his opinion, she gave directions concerning her funeral; and, having taken leave of her children, requested her son to administer to her the holy sacrament. In the quietness of the sick-room she joined two or three of her family in the communion of saints, and expressed her unshaken trust in God. She spoke calmly, and with wonderful recollection, of the greatness of eternal love, of the mystery of human redemption, and of her faith in Him who had now called her to "tread the vale of death." Upon one occasion, when her daughter was sitting by her, she was asked if she re-

membered Skelton, and her friend Mrs. P——, and her first meeting with Mr. Michison. “O, yes;” the whole scene was fresh in her mind. She could recall the village-church, and the sermon, and the place where she was kneeling, when she vowed to renounce everything she then held dear, if she might know the truth of God, and be made happy in Christ her Saviour; and presently she repeated,—

“Light o’er my thoughts the past and present flies,
But deeper far the awful future lies;
For soon the past and present will have flown,
The future lies in regions yet to me unknown.

“O thou sweet hope! the anchor of my soul,
Be ever near, my every doubt control;
From me let all but *faith* and *hope* depart,
I’ll clasp Thy *love* for ever to my heart.”

Contrary to the expectations of her friends, she recovered, and was restored to a measure of health. But life was now labour and sorrow; the infirmities of age were increasing; and she was often too weak to take her accustomed walk round the garden, and gather her favourite flowers. On the 3d of September, 1864, the last anniversary of her birth, she was well enough to invite her little grandchildren to spend the evening with her, together with the poor aged people of the village. They had tea and plum-cake together, and sang “The Evening

Hymn;" and then the girls listened to her stories of the olden time, of her own childhood, remembered for eighty years, of village wakes and fairs, and superstitious observances on St. Mark's eve.

"This month," continues the diary, "I have seen the return of my eighty-fifth birthday. My growing weakness whispers of life's decline. Recollections of the past are still most vivid. Trifles of yesterday often vanish from my mind, but I can recall events long distant. O, how much is crowded into those recollections! Friends, loved almost to idolatry, gone. Disappointed hopes; again kingdoms overturned, and crowned heads dethroned."

The following little poem is dated March, 1865: it must have been written rather earlier, but it was probably the last she attempted to copy:—

"O my long life! now pass'd away
Like the frail tales of yesterday.
I look around; no help I see;
One hope alone remains for me,—
Redeeming love! to this I fly:
My Saviour lives! I shall not die.

"Oft on my bed, like drooping willow,
Tears have moisten'd my sad pillow,
Till morn arose with golden smile,
To cheer my sorrows or beguile.
Redeeming love! to this I fly:
My Saviour lives! I shall not die.

“ Still on life’s verge I trembling stand,
A voice says, ‘ Watch, the time’s at hand.’
I feel each thought that I have known
Is open to the’ Eternal Throne.
Redeeming love ! to this I fly :
My Saviour lives ! I shall not die.”

“ As a child I lie passive in the arms of the eternal Father, having no trust but in His mercy, through the love of my adorable Redeemer. I am a sinner; but He is my Saviour.” “ Once more I have approached the Lord’s table, and received the memorials of Christ’s dying love, from the hands of my beloved F——. My deafness was a drawback to my feelings ; but as I kneeled and received the sacred tokens, I did, I think, feel power to remember Christ, and trust myself confidently to His mercy ; while, with tears of hope and fear, my mind rapidly ran on, and I thought of my son’s grave beside my own, in that secluded churchyard.” It was the last time she entered the church. During the winter months she was altogether confined to the house ; and when spring came, though she revived a little, it was plain that her remaining time must be counted by days or hours. She lived to see the landscape in its summer beauty, however, once more ; but faded before the autumn leaf had turned or fluttered to the ground. Yet the sands of life ran out slowly. She was obliged to *restrict herself to the upper rooms of the house,* ▲

on account of the difficulty of breathing in ascending the stairs. She was confined during the day to the sofa ; until, at length, her extreme weakness made it impossible for her to quit her bed. There she remained only for a few days. She gladly recognised her daughter, Mrs. Gill, who had hurried from the north to take a last farewell. Once her son asked her if she felt any better. "It is a superfluous question," she said : "I *must* leave you;" and again she testified to her trust in God and His love. Her few remaining hours were passed in prayer and praise. The powers of speech at last failed, and the eye grew dim. On Saturday evening, just as the last rays of the setting sun shone in the sick-chamber, life again seemed to flicker over the pale face. She turned her eyes to the place where her son was standing, and seemed to give those that were now kneeling around her a look of recognition and farewell. The expression then changed to one of surprise and joy, and without a sigh she "fell asleep."

The village-bells were tolling as the moon rose silently upon the green pastures around the parsonage, where the lifeless form lay, shrouded in the drapery of death ; but who dares to write of the awakening of the immortal soul *in the light of the eternal temple,—of the recognition of friends there,—of the vision of*

the New Jerusalem, where there is “no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying,”—of the swelling of the song of the redeemed,—and of the throne of God and of the Lamb?

Christian reader! fellow-traveller to Mount Zion! if you have followed me thus far in the memorial of one who has left the church on earth for the fellowship of saints in heaven, forget not to give thanks with me for those who “have departed this life in the faith and fear of Christ.” And may you and I have grace so to follow their “good examples that, like them, we may be partakers of His holiness.”

Mrs. Newton’s funeral took place on the 12th of August, 1865. The wishes she had expressed in reference to it were fully carried out, and her mortal remains rest close by the sacred spot where she had last publicly kneeled to show forth the Lord’s death, in the little parish-church at Shelley.

Her character may be read in the foregoing pages. Of her failings we are unwilling to write; for even those failings leaned to virtue’s side. But of her high principle, her true moral worth, and simple, evangelical piety, those who knew her best may venture to speak. The story of her inner life, which we have read in the diary of nearly seventy years, was in harmony with that book of her outer history

which was open to all. She was a guileless, unostentatious Christian,—a true representative of feminine excellence of character,—ever acting within the range of her allotted duty ; faithful and devoted in the discharge of her obligations as a wife and a mother ; affectionate and forbearing as a friend ; humble and childlike in her religious trust. Home was her sphere of action. Her orbit was within the shelter of the domestic circle. The quiet fireside was the centre of her earthly happiness ; and there she ministered, and blessed, and ruled with becoming grace, and pursued her steady, unpretending course. Perhaps she may have erred a little on the side of excessive indulgence ; her affectionate disposition leading her to delight in nameless acts of self-sacrifice, and instinctively to seek to throw the veil of kindness and forbearance over the faults of those around her. But though she was not a Spartan mother, and her law was the “law of kindness,” she was ever firm and true to her principles, where right and wrong were concerned. When questions arose in her household which called for the exercise of maternal counsel with respect to duty to God, her spirit rose with the occasion. Even in advanced age, when standing as by her open grave, and in the shadow of eternity, a weary and exhausted pilgrim, *her firmness was immovable.* She remembered

her God, and was faithful to the trust He had confided to her.

Her respect for the Sabbath and the holy institutions of Christianity was a conspicuous trait in her character. Her anxiety to preserve a proper decorum upon the sacred day, not less than her marked dread of infringing upon the stated hours of family-worship, perhaps approached to formality. It is probable that the impressions caused by her early struggle to make a brave stand for the truth of God, when surrounded by the fashionable in youth, may have had some effect in occasioning these feelings. However this may be, they deepened with her years. There may have been something of excess in them; but they had their rise in the desire to glorify God, and to exalt the family-altar above obligations of minor importance. Another trait in her character was her diligence. She was never unemployed. From the time that it pleased God to call her from the world to the knowledge of His truth, till within a few days of her death, her life was one of activity. Her hands were busied with some little domestic work, even when her eyesight had so far failed as to render reading and writing impracticable. She followed out to the letter the excellent rule of John Wesley, "Never be unemployed: never be triflingly employed: never while away time."

The biography of the Christian believer carries with it its own lesson. It is not like the conception of the sculptor or the painter, which, however beautiful it may be, is but an image of his own creation, a delineation of an imaginary form. Biography is the unveiling of the inner life,—a record of the struggles and aspirations of the deathless soul. It is strong to teach in the inspiration reflected from above. It is thus the sainted dead yet speak; thus they leave their “footprints on the sands of time,” that we may take courage from their example, and be guided by their influence. “Blessed,” says the voice from the eternal glory, “are the dead which die in the Lord; . . . that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

“O, soothe us, haunt us, night and day,
Ye gentle spirits far away,
With whom we shared the cup of grace,
Then parted; ye to Christ’s embrace,
We to the lonesome world again;
Yet mindful of the’ unearthly strain
Practised with you at Eden’s door—
To be sung on, where angels soar
With blended voices evermore.”







